

THE
HOUSE OF GOLD



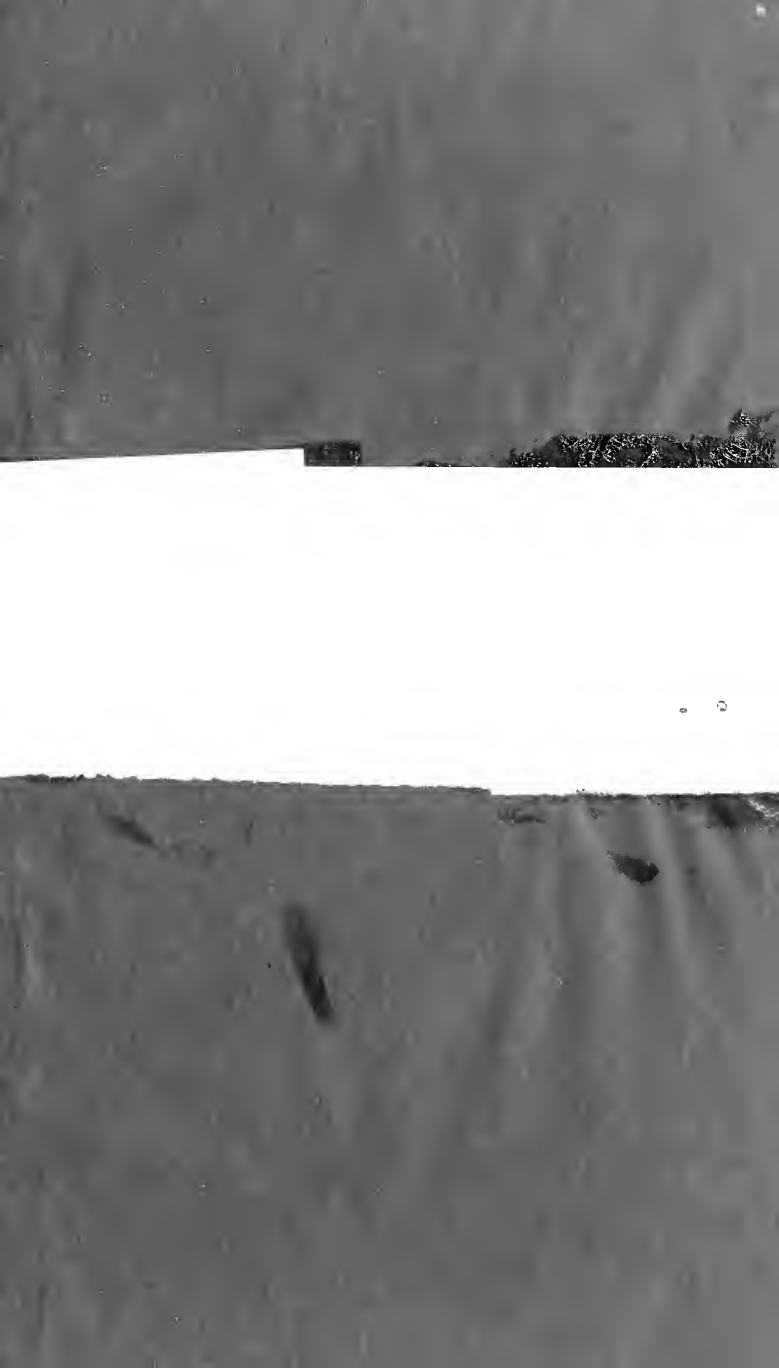
AND
SAINT OF NAZARETH

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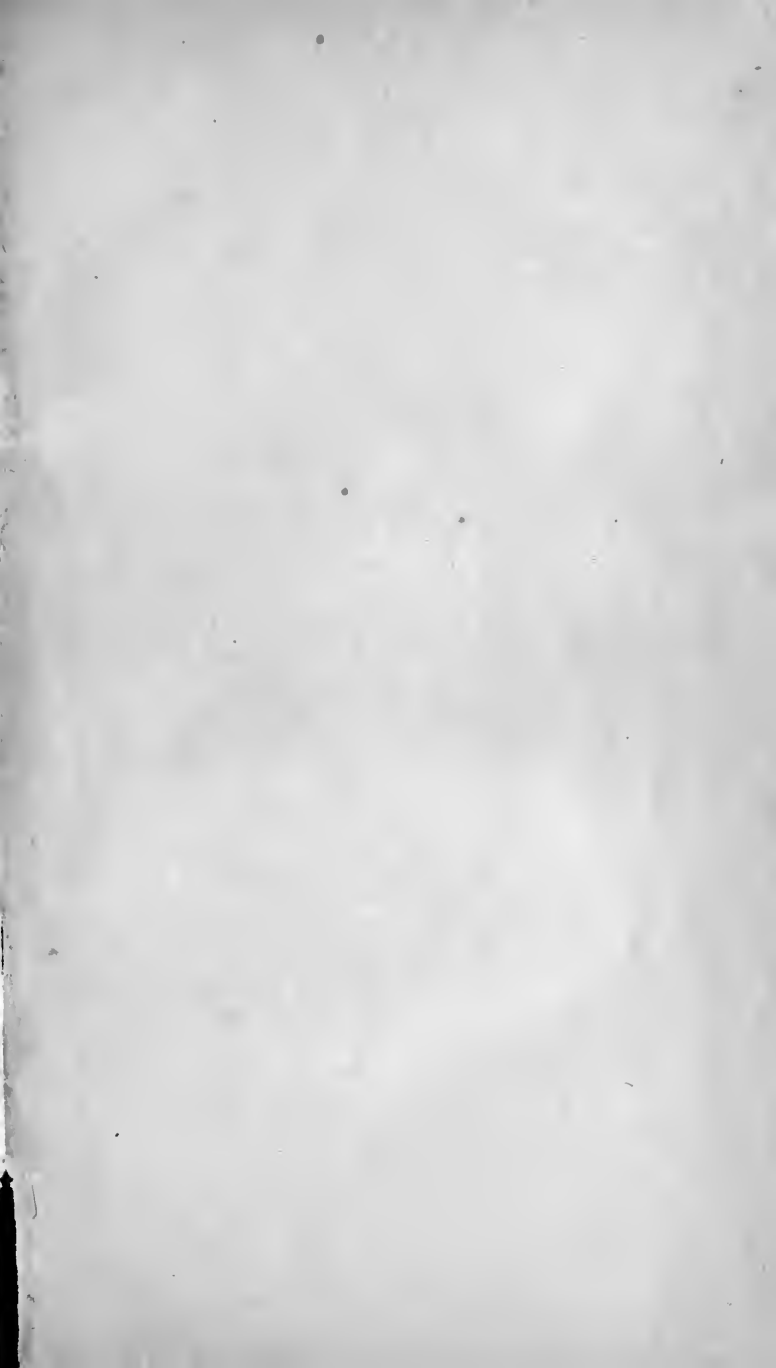
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THE
House of **G**old

AND

THE SAINT OF NAZARETH.

A POETICAL LIFE OF SAINT JOSEPH.

The Tree under which the Mystical Rose was Planted.
The Wall of Jasper that Surrounded the Tower of Ivory,
The Bridegroom of the House of Gold,

"The husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus."—MATTHEW.

"The keeper of his Lord, him shall his Lord glorify."—ISAIAH.

"Go to Joseph."—GENESIS.

"Beloved Children, go to Joseph."—PIUS IX.—Feb., 1871.

Abby Maria Hemmaway.

ROSA MYSTICA SERIES—VOL. III.

By MARIE JOSEPHINE.

BALTIMORE:
KELLY, PIET AND COMPANY,
174 W. Baltimore Street.
1873.

PS 1919

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APPROBATIONS.

BURLINGTON, VT., 10th June, 1873.

MISS M. J. HEMENWAY, *Burlington, Vt. :*

I have read your new book, the *House of Gold and Saint of Nazareth*. I cannot too much commend the motive which prompted you to write it, which was a desire to promote devotion towards glorious St. Joseph. Hoping that it will attain so desirable an effect you are authorized to publish it with my *imprimatur*.

† LOUIS, *Bp. of Burlington, Vt.*

OGDENSBURG, April 16, 1873.

DEAR MISS HEMENWAY :

I heartily approve of the work which you propose to publish in honor of St. Joseph, entitled "The House of Gold and The Saint of Nazareth."

EDGAR P. WADHAMS,
Bishop of Ogdensburg.

RESIDENCE: CATHEDRAL, PHILADELPHIA,
5 May, 1873.

MISS HEMENWAY

May add my name to those of the Rt. Rev'd Bishops who have already approved "The House of Gold and The Saint of Nazareth."

JAMES FREDERICK,
Bishop of Philadelphia.

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., June 4, 1873.

DEAR MISS HEMENWAY:

After reading over some of the proof-sheets of "The House of Gold and The Saint of Nazareth," which I find to be a sweet metrical composition devoutly offered to the honor of St. Joseph, I subscribe with pleasure for the work and join in recommending it on the approbation of your own Bishop, which I am glad to see has been fully given. In the pages you sent me frequent mention is made of the holy names of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and this alone is sufficient to freshen our piety and bring us into holy intercourse of adoration and prayer before the inmates of the Holy House of Nazareth. Your book happily and devoutly written on so choice a subject cannot fail to have a wide circulation and to do much good. It will be a welcome visitor for St. Joseph's sake to every Catholic family, and I look to it as likely to be very influential, by its holy subject and chaste style, in exorcising the evil spirit of licentious literature, which because unopposed by such efforts as yours, has too much sway in our midst. With sincere regard,

† JOHN J. HOGAN,

Bishop of St. Joseph.



RECOMMEND.

CINCINNATI, 30 Jan., 1873.

DEAR MISS HEMENWAY:

I shall take copies and recommend your book. . . . Every female religious community ought to take one or more copies, for they all love and they have all received great benefits from the good St. Joseph.

Devotedly in our Lord,

J. B. PURCELL, *Abp. Cin.*

ENCOURAGEMENT.

Extract of a Letter from Manhattan College, May 10, 1873.

"Let me congratulate you on your noble undertaking in bringing out '*The House of Gold.*' Your really beautiful, *fragrant 'Rosa Immaculata'* is earnest that your present attempt will prove a decided success."

BLESSING.

Praying God to bless you and the Work you are doing for Him,

Very truly yours,

† F. P., *Bp. of Hartford.*

Seven Favors received for our little offering to St. Joseph; to be laid with it at our good Father's feet on a leaf or two onward. Let us dedicate them as a commemoration to his seven joys and seven sorrows—*Deo Gratias*—All for Joseph.—AUTHOR.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

An imposing obligation to the beautiful works of Faber—to that treasury of good things, the "*Ave Maria*"—the poetical Abbe Gerbet—the eloquent Orsini—to Binet's rich description of St. Joseph. First most grateful acknowledgements to the Right Reverend Prelates, who, in holy affection for St. Joseph, have benignly given approbation thus early, and thus kindly, to this humble effort to honor the Father among Saints by a sort of Poetical Life; after these our kindest Prelates, special gratitude, and a very happy indebtedness, to all who have subscribed and sent orders in advance of the first edition, among whom we may be allowed to mention, as assisting most, Rt. Rev. L. de Goesbriand, D. D., Most Rev. J. B. Purcell, D. D., Most Rev. John McCloskey, D. D., Archbishop of New York, Rt. Rev. Edgar P. Wadhams, D. D., Rt. Rev. James F. Wood, D. D., Rt. Rev. John Joseph Hogan, D. D., Rt. Rev. Francis P. McFarland, D. D., Rt. Rev. John Joseph Williams, D. D., Bishop of Boston; Rt. Rev. S. V. Ryan, D. D., Bishop of Buffalo; Rt. Rev. James Gibbons, D. D., Bishop of Richmond; Rt. Rev. Thomas Foley, D. D., Bishop of Chicago; Rt. Rev. Patrick John Ryan, Coadj. Bishop of St. Louis; Rev. H. Joseph Richter, D. D., of Cincinnati; Rev. Thomas Preston, New York; Rev. M. Joseph Finotti, Arlington Mass.; Rev. T. McLaughlin, New Rochelle, N. Y.; Rev. C. Huber, Holly Springs, Miss.; NOTRE DAME COLLEGE, St. Joseph's County, Indiana; ST. MARY'S ACADEMY, St. Jos. Co., Ind.; MOUNT ST. VINCENT'S ACADEMY, near Yonkers, N. Y.; Rev. A. Varsi, S. J. for SANTA CLARA COLLEGE, California; DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE, New York; CONVENT OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, Monroe, Michigan; CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF LIGHT, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Sisters of Mercy, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, San Francisco, Cal.; ST. MARY'S ACADEMY, Alexandria, Va., and several Ladies who have made up clubs. To all whom St. Joseph, if he owns the little book we have written him, will be obligated as well as ourself.

Humbly yours,

MISS HEMENWAY.







TO

The Dear Spouse

OF

ROSA MYSTICA,

THE GREAT, THE GOOD ST. JOSEPH.



WE LEAN UPON THEE.



“Hail, Spouse of our Lady! dear nurse of her Child!
Life's ways are full weary, the desert is wild;
Bleak sands are all round us, no home can we see;
Sweet Spouse of our Lady, we lean upon thee.”

“O blessed Saint Joseph! how great was thy worth,
The one chosen shadow of God upon earth,
Of Christ the fond guardian, ah, then, wilt thou be,
Sweet Spouse of our Lady, a father to me?”

“Thou hast not forgotten the long, dreary road
When Mary took turns with thee, bearing thy God,”
.

“Ah, give me thy burden to bear for a while,
To kiss His warm lips and adore His sweet smile.”

“When the treasures of God were unsheltered on earth,
Safe keeping was found for them both in thy worth;
Guardian of Jesus, be a father to me,
Sweet Spouse of our Lady, and I will love thee.”



“V. Behold a man without blame, a true worshipper of God,”

“R. Abstaining from every evil work, and abiding in his innocence.”



44 **J**OSEPH, pure spouse of that immortal Bride
Who shines in ever-virgin glory bright,
Thy praise let all the earth re-echoing send
Back to the realms of light."

Not until after death their blissful crown
Others obtain ; but unto thee was given
In thine own lifetime to enjoy thy God
As do the blest in Heaven.'

DEDICATION SECOND.

TO THE VENERABLE AND DEAR

MRS. LYDIA CLARKE MEECH.

Baptized into the Holy Catholic Church in her eightieth year.

MY mother, since my mother died—almost—
A melancholy year had worn out first,
To prove what is home without a mother.
It is not so to all. Some have made homes;
In another heart found love to dim th' olden—
Children of their own have arisen up;
The old ties have been transferred. But where one
To the old nest has clung until the hand
Of death shook it to fragments in an hour,
It is otherwise: to sudden wake to find
The old nest gone—a mother, still the best love,
Gone forevermore!—earth's forevermore.
There are mothers of the body and of the soul:
All mothers are the first, and it is sweet;
But the last, her child is twice mothered:
And the earth has not another such a gift
As an intellectual mother: no friendship
As that growing from the cradle to the grave,
Only a little more beautiful, each day:
When the circle of the fireside is shivered
By such a blow, and all the household breaks
And parts with it, and one who has divorced
Herself from a world, once so kind, having chosen
Faith, and by wearing the Virgin's rose
Within her breast, has when the old home goes,
No human shelter left, how sweet to find
A mother: To walk in desolateness, live

Of the world, yet, not of the world—apart—
 Until the very people that you meet seem strange—
 Thus was it with the writer of our little book—
 When in her pastor's house one day, he sent
 Her on a little visit to another soul,
 More desolate. "Go," said the kind Priest, "Go!"
 She went with a touched, but trembling heart,
 And to-day does mind the waiting, somewhat long,
 Within the handsome parlor. Handsome, she saw,
 O, how indifferently! Gay and beautiful,
 As contrasted with the small chamber
 In th' little Community—yet, where grief,
 Most congenial loneliness found, what else,
 Beside to saddened state, accordant, most:
 Running inaudible *aves* over,
 As th' door opened with smart, decisive push,
 And a woman of advanced years entered, tall,
 And but for the look all distract, beautiful still;
 As it was, with the great look of struggle
 And weariness in her face, she was grand!

She had been a fine, old-fashioned house-wife,
 With many maids in her day, and could not give
 Up care as many weaker house-mothers do.
 What better could she do? She had no daughter
 In the house on which to lean. Her house was full
 With such as make, but take not care away.
 Poor, old lady! left to battle at the helm—
 Alone! She had just come from her preserves
 That, left with careless maid might burn.
 Her visitor, an aged woman, more weary
 And o'er-burdened than herself, saw pitiful,
 And rising up breathed but the Father's name
 The aged lady loved, when straight a look,
 A sudden gladness in those sad, dark eyes!
 Both hands were took—"You are a convert!"
 Few magic words; and by her on the sofa
 Was quite forgot, all but to pour a heart,

Sore full, into the heart of sympathy :
 In tender complaint, dear, old, childlike lady !
 To tell how that the ladies shunned her now,
 And old acquaintance passed by. She had
 In proud sense been one the world had honored ;
 It was hard in her old age first to learn ;
 Harder yet—the only Catholic of her house
 And of her kindred, absent, the contest
 In the old circles going on to draw
 Her poor, desolate and sad-besieged soul back
 Unto them. How friendless and alone she felt !
 But two friends that day had met, as God
 Had caused. Age come sudden, a rainbow, under,
 Grew tender and beautified in that fair hour,
 And when her visitor would go she led
 Her to the garden, where the autumn flowers lingered,
 Giving her sprays with invitation lovely
 As her flowers. “ Come for another when they fade.”
 And the flowers were carried where the sweet lamp
 Of the Sacrament burns before the Lord ;
 And for her who gave, presented at Mary’s feet :
 And often as a two-weeks came, the visit
 Was renewed ; and when th’ winter snows covered
 Th’ ground and there were no more flowers to go for,
 Or to give—within the Christmas octave—
 The elder friend drew the younger to her home,
 “ And took her to my heart and to my arms,”
 As she would after say, “ to let her go
 No more.”

Our venerable lady-mother,
 Seven precious years !—the last is flitting—
 And mother, dear, old mother, did we ever
 To each other cling as now ? Strengthen not
 The ties each day ? O, there has been so much
 To make it so ! that first affable winter—
 That first communion in the Christmas days,
 For which the younger helped the elder friend
 Prepare—the mornings and the afternoons

That followed, when the dear, aged matron
 Hemmed the ruffles of her caps, and Marie
 Commenced a book for the great Saint Joseph;
 But at the eve, while the sweet old lady
 Rested, the younger read the page redolent
 With the breath of a saint, Catholic tales,
 Or which the elder did most appreciate,
 Th' sharp, quick controversy and argument
 Of faith. To one, th' old home-evenings again;
 The other loved to hear no one read beside;
 "But you, you only can I understand,"
 The fond pretend; and when St. Joseph's month
 Opened the spring, there was a confirmation
 In th' "sweet home," holy oils, a Bishop's hand
 Upon a bowed head of eighty-and-one years—
 Magnificent hour! The humble Bishop
 Went in holy silence forth, when bright, swift,
 The aged, fresh confirmist rose, clasping
 Her happy sponsor in her radiant joy—
 "My child!" imprinting it with her first kiss
 On her new Godmother-child's cheek. A lady
 Of the older school, genial, but stately,
 A kiss was a choice thing—though gracious might
 Upon her brow from a young lip be allowed—
 "My child," she said—it was the christening word—
 "Glory to God! now have I found my home!"
 That glad, bright gloria, that heavenly kiss,
 For she who kissed with the Holy Ghost was full—
 Crowning th' hour that seeming could not be more
 crowned:
 And that paradisial day, brave, midway,
 The dear old soldier harnessed now for Christ,
 Starting from the soft dream, or revery,
 To protest—"To the flesh-pots of Egypt
 I will never again look back!" In th' steps
 Of so great a grace, the precious sick days;
 But when the daffodils began to golden
 The garden, the dear invalid looked out,

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And when her tulips in their dash of bloom
 Came unfurling their gay painted banners
 Up and down each garden walk, the two walked
 Together there. The summer also brought
 One from his business in the Capitol,
 That lighted up the aged mother's eye
 And the whole house made more bright. The one branch
 Of the early marriage of her youth and love ;
 And he for almost two-score years before,
 Of the Blessed Virgin a son, attached,
 Came with what delight to kiss his mother's lips
 And note the dear growth of the faith, cropping
 In little ways out from that aged life :
 And so for several years. The two would talk
 How much more pleasant the house, with him here :
 And the old dual solitude come round,
 Then would enjoy to be, the two, together :
 The two that together never loneliness felt ;
 But from the first day they, together, lived,
 Whoever by, missed the other, absent ;
 So intimate the two did dwell together :
 Yet, our Lord never enters to a house,
 But with Him in, He brings a cross—though kind
 To our poor weakness, He may go out to come
 In later. There were weary days and nights
 When the aged one drooped a sufferer
 And longed for the absent one, beloved,
 And the attendant one watched by her couch
 Alone, and fearful the dear one might go
 Ere he might come, who should : One of those nights
 He came, th' feeble old mother to no more leave ;
 And the sick one from that hour began to mend.
 The long winter eve, the happy invalid,
 Within the little sitting-room, now lay
 Upon her pillows, and she, who called
 Her mother, sat at her low sofa-foot
 And sewed, and the master of the house read
 To them—Father Huc in Thibet: bright evening

Followed bright evening—Father Huc and the Chinese ;
 Or he would talk of the sweets of quietude
 And home ; how we did want no visitors,
 Baring the dear Bishop to with us dine
 Some holyday—and Father L—— to breakfast,
 The times the Holy Sacrament was brought
 To th' dear mother-invalid in her room.
 Happy days ! The little family was complete.
 Th' winter went beautifully. Precious invalid,
 She had two to nurse her now, and, though twice
 The fever yet, in the twelve-month came back,
 When each time her pale brows shone with the oils
 For the sick, sweet restored, softly she stole,
 As it were, back to stay with her loved ones :
 Spring came again, and she had one to take
 The garden in his care, and her to visit
 In her wheel-chair, her flowers and his improvements.
 Pleasant it was to see him take her out
 Some fine morning, first unto her flowers, and then
 Unto his garden ; unto the grapery,
 To see the shoots in their rich hues breaking
 From the naked vine, or unto the beds
 Where the pink and orange beets of a new seed
 Were growing, or to see the celery-trench,
 How large the peas had podded, his radishes,
 The twelve-rowed sweet-corn square, and all
 Of the vegetable beds and borders, and how nice
 He had the old pear tree swarded round,
 How the plum-grafts he had set were sprouting.
 Never man more petted tree or plant :
 Pleasant it was to see how well he loved
 The gardens—to observe one in mid life
 Watching the growth of things with as fresh joy
 As any young child in the city bred
 And nurtured that had never seen orchard,
 Or field, or garden grow.

Pleasant it was

For the three to often make these visits.

It was mostly such a delightful summer
 Until the suddenly darkened ending
 Of that rich August month—the last together!
 When he who came to be so dear a staff
 T' that feeble old mother's declining days,
 Was stricken—suffered so hugely five days—
 Of the same number as our Lord's wounds—
 Dreadful days! Th' house was darkened-half and closed,
 The aged mother wandering between the rooms,
 Lost—staggered with a fear she could not name!

“A martyrdom!” “A perfect martyrdom!”
 Said she who by him stood. “It is!” “It is!”
 Responding the sufferer as one who knew
 The sense—still most patient in his agonies,
 A resignation edifying, as God's children,
 Who never idly suffer, most becomes.
 Sick unto death at first—“Close up the doors,”
 He cried, “and for me pray! for a great thing
 It is, in midst of life your face to turn
 Toward eternity and in a few days
 Prepare before God to stand!” “Close up th' doors
 And let none in here but the physician
 Who cannot save!”

It was th' midnight
 Of that first dark night—“Every moment
 For me pray!” She who had found a brother
 Equal to the mother, “every moment,” answered,
 “And *you*; for Mary whom you have always loved
Will hear you :” and the sick man began to pray—
 Simple as any child. It was the old
 And dear Hail Mary. But with what emphasis
 Upon the *now* and at the hour of *death*;
 And at the third hail to th' heavenly mother,
 Brightened, so sure, I shall be helped, he said,
 She who was by took heart, interpreting
 That he would live; but after knew Mary
 Had her promise given; but it was to help

Him to die; which how well did she redeem,
 Giving such fortitude, giving the care
 Of Priest and Sacrament; a Bishop's blessing
 For dying upon the almost unconscious head;
 The gentle Sister of Charity to assist
 In the prayer and watch held round his bed;
 And between the awful, swift slow hours
 Of dissolving pains, some heavenly moments
 Of the lucid intervale and respite,
 Dearer that it could but last a moment,
 Or an hour—The precious observation
 To her who by him sat through all these nights,
 "Why wanders mother from room to room!" "I'll not
 My mother! She would die before my eyes."
 "I could not leave her with another!" "The waves
 I see!" "The waves will rise! Yet, you must stand
 By her—you will: yet, you, before I die,
 Must promise me!"

O, that love for his mother!

It was his ruling passion even in death:
 At foot of every cross there are wells
 Of consolation: this was one; and they think
 Who watched by him, that he never ceased
 To pray; and when speech had fainted—choked—
 There was the tender inquiry of the eye
 And appeal unto your face for prayer;—
 And when death came in the night—in an hour,
 Feared, but so sudden and unexpect'd there was
 But time for her beside him knelt to say
 The "*O Lord Jesus, thy hands, into*"—
 The sweet death-rapid clear "*I do!*" "*I do!*"
 The illumined whiteness veiling instant
 O'er th' serene death-beautified countenance—
 Th' moment leave-look—eyes leveled to your face,
 Touched with vision, shedding their parting sweetness—
 Raining brightness, in their large dark loveliness,
 So surpassing—then closing—shutting down
 Their lids while softly burning, so deliberate,

Though in one moment all—it was slow—
 A never to be forgotten heavenliness—
 Without gasp, or sigh, a life had departed—
 A peace, the meekest, deepest ever seen
 On a dead face! One could say and only say,
 Looking upon, "*My peace*"—"my peace, I leave
With you." Not my triumph, not my glory,
 But sweeter far, "my peace." A mother,
 On the threshold of death, hurried in
 For the last look, an aged mother, looking
 On the new dead brow of her only son,
 Was awed and a moment held. She will tell
 To-day, "His face was as an angel when first
 I came within the door,"—"the countenance
 So lamblike, meek-inclined—the dove-like peace—
 How beautiful to me he looked!" "Stayed, I was
 In wonder—I had never seen anything
 So beautiful!"

But, when the undertaker
 Comes in the night—when there is a man dead
 In the house in the night—how awful the hours
 Unto the light; and with the coming, how sore
 The confusion and pressure of the world without
 The two walked after the bier;—the mother
 Clung to her sole child now—others followed;
 Those who came to weep and those who come
 Not to weep when th' sole heir of a house dies—
 A city sent its honored men to bear
 Th' pall—th' congregation of th' great cathedral
 Mourned, and the church had never in our midst,
 Done such honors for one of her laity—
 And the orphans were out in a body.

Days followed upon which we would not touch,—
 Poor, old mother, supreme bereaved; but the heart
 Though pierced, cannot at will die. She lived:
 There are but two now; but still are two yet.
 There were those, it is true, too true, rushed close

On that sad funeral day, and in so strange-
 And sudden way loved now that aged mother,
 Weeping o'er her fresh grave, they would have torn
 The one true friend who had become a part
 Of all her dear familiar life, also, away,
 They came, they saw, they struggled, again—
 Again—again, in this lone mourning house,
 Until the two hearts grew how sick, my God!
 What heeded they the wishes, arrangements,
 Desires of the Dead, or of the living?

There has succeeded sometime calm: that it might last!
 Conflicts in good cause are even painful things:
 But, mother by God's kind help we have and will
 By God's kind help "together bide the blast!"
 And may God give so sweet a mother long,
 And when she comes to the valley of the shadow,
 Saint Joseph lend to her his staff and spread
 His mantle over her head and let her lean
 Upon his arm; for well Saint Joseph knows
 That to him I can only give her up,
 And that when I must. We tremble, mother,
 Thou art so aged, but we cling: and to whom
 After our Saint Joseph, would I inscribe
 The dedication of our little book,
 Written with you, but to you? You found
 Th' house for St. Joseph's book to be written in,
 And St. Joseph will be willing, I join
 You with him here in the dedication,
 Which I do as to my sweetest mother.

MARIE JOSEPHINE.

Jan. 1, 1873.

DATED on the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, in honor of
 Saint Joseph, the Priest upon that occasion.

Lydia E. Mearns
 aet. LXXXVII a. Y.
 Dec. 1873



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Domus Xurra,

THE SAINT OF NAZARETH.

THE WELL-SPRING IN THE HOUSE OF JACOB.

"And Mathan begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus."—Mat. i. 16.

"A BABE IN THE HOUSE IS A WELL-SPRING OF JOY."

THE EVE OF THE PATRIARCHAL LIFE.



F the dawn of that patriarchal day was fair in which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived, how tender and illumined must have been the sunset in which Mathan and Jacob and Joseph walked: the three first patriarchs, the three last patriarchs that precede the Messiah. Let us contemplate that long line of patriarchs and kings ending in Saint Joseph.



THE HOUSE IN WHICH SAINT JOSEPH
WAS BORN.

A GOODLY Galilean house in the suburbs
Of the town—a room in the rear of the house—
A sweet, retired and pleasant room. Jacob
And Susannah—the pious young parents
Of Saint Joseph—contemplating their first-born.

THE SAINT OF NAZARETH.

SUSANNAH.

See his brows! Jacob, and his eyes!

JACOB.

An heir

- In his house, for whom David need not blush.

SUSANNAH.

I have borne thee a son—and now—(smiling)

JACOB.

Thy husband will, as Lia saith—

SUSANNAH.

Nay! nay!

Dear spouse, I have not need! not need!

JACOB.

The heart

Of thy husband doth in thee confide? Well!
Rosy, little wife, it is well; and yet this pledge
Binds still more close. We are a family
Now before the Lord.

SUSANNAH.

Rounded out complete.

JACOB.

Or good begun.

SUSANNAH.

Ah! well, my lord, what makes
Families? The Lord be praised!

JACOB.

The Lord be praised!

The hearth is cold, indeed, where children rise
Not up and sport. The gracious Lord be praised.

JOSEPH.

“On the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised.”—Lev. xii, 3.

THE pleasant room we have looked in before :

Its couch with its mother of one octave—

Beulah, a younger sister of Susannah,—

Pretty and dear young nurse, making ready

For visitors. What a lovely room !

The couch, resting upon lion-paws, carved

Of some choice dark wood and its tapestries

Of needle-work—curtains of fine linen

With scarlet fringes, looped back—coverlet

Of the softest woolen fabric, snow-white,

With raised work of roses—patterns of th’ rose

Of Sharon all over it, twining sceptres—

A small table opposite stands, also,

Upon a lion’s back—th’ head looking out

From under the bed of the board, the tail

Whisked around one leg. It was a privilege

Of the families of the tribe of Judah

To use this emblem in their furniture,

As it was, moreover, to appropriate

Scarlet colors ;—the floor and the ceiling

Of cedar, and a wainscotting inlaid

With palm figures of almug-wood. Her lord,

Susannah’s, was of the house of the king—

It was a bower of sweetness.

The red

Is just coming back to our young mother’s check.

She reclines complacently upon the couch.

The sweet lattice is open to the east,

Through which is seen a lawn where “ camels

Of colors as various as the flowers,"
Are feeding. The delightful morning air
Comes in at the open lattice—a bird
Sings on a thorn-tree without—Beulah,
Going in and out, humming a dear song
Of David's—of the "loving kindness"—
Teaching th' rose-stems to stand with the lilies
In an alabaster vase on the table
By th' wall—hovering round another pretty piece
Of carpenter-work that stands in the centre
Of the room—hanging garlands on the sides
Of a cradle where the two great-mothers,—
Th' mother of Jacob and th' mother of Susannah—
Will lay the dear infant when circumcised,
And when she has disposed her garlands, brings
Th' crown Susannah had worn at her spousals
And lays it upon the head of the cradle;
Stands back—looks at her work with approbation;
Goes and kisses the cheek of Susannah,
Removes the little embroidered blanket
From the head of the babe in the bosom
Of her sister—discovers our infant,
In babe-bands, curious with needle-work.
Beulah is espoused, but not yet given
In marriage, fair virgin! The babe awaked
By the uncovering, smiles into her eyes,
Which straightway she reports to all in the house.
How affable a grace from God makes one!
And this babe was a great grace from God—a gift
From the good God to that home—a great gift.
But by this time the relatives and friends
Commenced t' assemble, among whom were Joachim

And Anna, at this period some years married,
She as yet not having had any child.
All the guests brought presents to Susannah,
As was the custom at this feast; and the hour
Having come for the ceremony, the men
Came to the door. It was contrary to th' law
They should enter, but standing before th' door,
Mathan standing first, the father of Jacob,
And oldest man present, offering thanks
To the Lord for his family, inquired,
As was the opening of the ceremony,
By what name the child should be circumeised.
And Rebekah, mother of Jacob, grandmother
Unto the babe, made answer for the women
Assembled within the room of Susannah :
Rachel, who was beloved, as Lia, likewise,
The spouse less loved, named the sons that they bore.
Our daughter, as th' custom in Israel, should speak
(The venerable matron turning toward the couch
Upon which her young daughter-in-law sat);
For thou hast borne an heir unto our house,
Our first seed's seed; and this day and from hence
Art unto us as a daughter from our womb.
And Susannah, a soft glow of happiness
Coming into her face, mentioned the name
Of Joseph, if pleasing to their parents.

And Mathan, standing, outstretching his arms, cried,
Jacob had a son. He loved him and made
For him a coat—the colors a variety.
He showed to him favor, and his brethren
Envied him. But the sheaves of his brothers

Bowed unto his sheaf, and the eleven stars
And the sun and the moon did obeisance.
And they, still envious lest that he should rule
Over them, sold him into servitude
Unto the Egyptians. But th' Lord prospered
Joseph even in the house of the Gentiles.
He was tempted, but endured and sinned not.
He was cast into the prison, but lived
To interpret the dream of the king and ride
In the chariot of Pharo—to give
Bread unto all Egypt and to his brethren.
To give bread unto the hungry—to bear
Bread in his hands unto those who famish—
May the name of this our son be Joseph !
Which last was by prophecy ; for Joseph
When he bore Christ in his arms bore the Bread
That came from Heaven for all who famish.

Then th' scribe wrote th' name on the roll of the tribe,
And they carried the babe in procession
To the synagogue, where he was circumcised.
And while they were gone to the synagogue
The servants of Susannah spread two banquets ;
And when Jacob and his kinsfolks returned,
And the two mothers had installed the babe
In th' cradle, all sat down with contentment
To the banquets prepared in abundance—
The women to a banquet in the apartment
Of Susannah, and the men to the banquet
Of Jacob in another apartment.
This was the first feast for Saint Joseph.

“ HOLY JOSEPH, WE BESEECH THEE, HEAR US.”—*Lit. of St. Jos.*

SUSANNAH AND JACOB.

Their kinfolk being departed, Susannah fondling the dear babe with maternal sweetness—Jacob bending over the young mother and the child. Proud father, it is his child and his spouse—and the child, the infant Joseph.

JACOB.

It is brave, he wept not! Not a tear fell!

SUSANNAH.

A sign of peace.

JACOB.

A promise of great peace
And of benediction. Blessed are they who have seed!

SUSANNAH.

Anna sighed as she kissed my child—the hands
And the feet of my babe.

JACOB.

It is a sorrow
To Joachim, they have no children.

SUSANNAH.

Anna
Was espoused some years before me, and hath no son.

JACOB.

And Joachim, the man most pious in Israel.

SUSANNAH.

And Anna is worthy:
May the Lord, as me, make her a mother.

(A silence—Susannah gazing into the face of the babe—Jacob for a long time regarding the meditative face of Susannah.)

JACOB.

What for thy thought now, my fair spouse?

SUSANNAH.

Dear babe!

(Involuntarily first caressing the child, and then looking up into her husband's happy and considering eyes.)

That *first* Joseph, he may hear of this child?

JACOB.

And pray for the new stalk bearing his name?
May he so ask holiness and wisdom,
And his incorruptible chastity,
And all his great virtues.

SUSANNAH.

Our sweet Joseph!

JACOB.

Whether from the chambers of the saints they see
Us, we know not, yet may pious presume
Those from our tribes and our families
May go in with knowledge and messages.
A good name! and we are blest, Susannah,
Before the Lord our God. A king could not
Be more—a son of such sweetness and promise;
Our first-born! May he grow up before the Lord
As Joseph the patriarch in his youth.



THE INFANT JOSEPH'S PRESENTATION.

"THEY CARRIED HIM TO JERUSALEM TO PRESENT HIM TO THE LORD."—Luke ii, 22.

"Humble Imitator of the Incarnate Word, pray for us."—
Litany.

AND when forty days had come, Jacob took
With him Susannah and the child, his friends
And kinfolk, and went up to Jerusalem
To present his first-born before the Lord.

In the courts of the temple contemplate
The young patriarchal father, Jacob,
And his pious, youthful spouse, Susannah,
Like the young rose-tree of the gardens
Of Galilee, bending over her own dear bud,
So fair! More holy than all the women there,
Save the barren and commiserated Anna,
Or the pious Elizabeth, the saintly spouse
Of the zealous and godly priest Zachary.
Which was holiest—Elizabeth, Susannah?
Mother of Joseph? Mother of the Baptist?
Elizabeth walked with Anna by the side
Of Susannah—Susannah bearing her babe.
Jacob and the men proceed to the court
For the men—Mathan, his father, with Jacob;
All of his brethren and of his kinsmen;
And th' women went into th' court for th' women:
Both courts overlooked the sanctuary.

Susannah bore her babe unto the door
Of the court of th' altars, and gave the infant

Into the arms of the priest, saying, "*I come
To offer to you the gift which God gave
To me.*" And the priest presented the child
Upon the altar—and uncovering his head
Made a prayer. Jacob, his father and brethren
Bowed with him down in the court of the men ;
Susannah, with Anna and Elizabeth,
Th' mother of her spouse and her own mother,
Who was a widow, knelt within the court
Of the women opposite. And when the priest
Had concluded the prayer, Jacob approached
With a lamb and five shekels of silver,*
And implored the priest to accept the lamb
And the silver for the child. And the priest
Bore the child to its mother, who had arisen
And stood in waiting at the door of th' court
Of the women ; and as the priest drew near,
All the women with her remaining, knelt—
Susannah, kneeling down, received to her arms
The child—kissed its lips and in low words thanked
God, as in the rite. A voice, tremulous
And full of love, was Susannah's.

And the priest
Passed over to Jacob, holding the lamb
Tethered with a cord that was scarlet—
The poor lamb dumb before its sacrificers—
Two Levites assisting,—Jacob and the men
And Susannah and the women in the courts,
Bowing low down their heads before the Lord

* See description of the ceremony—*Leviticus*.

And smiting their breast—the victim was slain.
The priests dipped the hyssop branch in the blood.
The altar was sprinkled, and what was left
The priest let drop at the bottom thereof.*
The smoke of the sacrifice arose a savor.
The prayer of Jacob and Susannah was heard,
And of all that prayed with them—Zachary
The priest, Mathan, Joachim and Anna,
Rebekah, Sarah and Elizabeth.
The babe reposed upon his mother's breast,
His mild, infant eyes raised the meantime
To heaven.

Precious babe, we contemplate
Thee and thy pious parents on their knees,
And remember how thou, too, wilt yet come
As a virgin father with thy pure spouse,
Bearing Life in her arms—that one mother,
O, so much fairer than thy own fair mother,
Infolding thee beautifully! Mystical babe,
Whose representative thou shalt be and come
With whom, and bring whom, what a father
Thou wilt be! That thou, little Joseph-babe
Will yet bring God here as a son!

Joseph,
The aged man, or the middle-aged, past
A little—whom we always associate
In our pictures of Jesus and Mary,
And Bethlehem and Egypt and Nazareth—
Joseph, that noble and patriarchal man,

*“And of the blood he shall sprinkle the side of the altar; whatever is left he shall let drop at the bottom thereof.”—Lev. v. 9.

Or that grand, old man leaning on a staff,
 Bland all his face, beard as immaculateness,
 Venerable protector of the Madonna mother,
 Is this the bud of all that augustness,
 Sanctity, sereneness, paternalness, peace?
 The beginning of the man who shall picture
 The Father in Heaven upon the earth?
 Our babe here? his parents having presented
 Him unto the Lord as he shall present,
 With Mary, Jesus within this temple.
 It is a new picture to us of Joseph,
 Yet one that must have been—th' Infant Joseph.

Benevolent Father, in memory
 Of thy pure infancy, look down
 Upon thy orphanages and thy pupils!
 Pray for the little ones committed to thy care.

“THROUGH ALL THY VIRTUES, ST. JOSEPH, HELP US.”



JERUSALEM.

“JERUSALEM MY HAPPY, HAPPY HOME.”

JOSEPH having become twelve years of age,
 Jacob and Susannah when they went up
 As their wont to the feast at Jerusalem,
 Took him with them: As they journeyed, Jacob
 Pressing on with eagerness, that his son
 May see Jerusalem—till having come
 Abruptly around the base of a hill,
 They stood suddenly still, gazing downward:

"The little party had been following for some time a rugged path which crossed the table-land of the barren mountain, when (Jacob) suddenly stopped at an abrupt turn of the rock and stretched his arm toward the south with an emotion of religious exaltation mingled with national pride. The object which he thus pointed out to his companions was well worthy of being remarked, for Asia had nothing then more magnificent." . . . "It was a city of about thirty-three stadas in circumference, set in stone like a ruby of Belochistan; a city of marble, of cedars, of gold, whose splendor held in it something gloomy, ferocious, suspicious, denoting an unsettled power and a permanent dread of the stranger; a state of things abounding in strange contrasts. There were seen enormous towers magnificent as palaces, and palaces fortified like citadels. Its temple radiant with gold, stood glittering on a narrow table-land of the highest mountain, like the full-orbed moon when it rises over the snowy heights of Lebanon. It was almost an impregnable fortress, held in awe by the people of God, while the tower of Antonia, with its four elegant turrets of polished marble, kept zealous and unceasing watch over the precincts of the temple. A triple enclosure of massive stone walls with ninety forts encompassed that singular city, and all around it lay gloomy valleys, dizzy heights and inaccessible rocks. That stately and warlike city . . . under the cloudless sky of Palestine, was that terrestrial paradise so poetically mourned on the banks of the Euphrates, the city of David and the Macabees; that Jerusalem which even in its slavish subjection is still hailed throughout the East by the ancient appellation then given it by the father of (Joseph), EL CODS (the Holy City)!"—ORSINI.

Jacob, touched with the glory of Jerusalem—
 He is a Hebrew—stands, every time he comes up
 To worship, to gaze from this stand-point—
 Every time longer—arm extended, body
 Leaned suspended forward, eye distended,
 Pointing it out to his young son, Joseph—
 A fresh face full of beautiful interest
 Serene Susannah knelt in a soft rapture,
 Gazing down on the glorious old city,
 "*Jerusalem, my happy, happy home!*"
 It bath two ties for her: religion, birth.

Susannah was born in Jerusalem.
There she lived till she became Jacob's spouse.
She can see from where she now kneels the street
That leads to Sarah's house—the top of th' palms
That hang over the little flat-roofed house.
The memories of her sainted father are dim,
But her mother, th' aged Sarah, dwells there,
And will be looking for their coming to-day;
And her prayer was soon said. It was fervent,
But short. She arises. She waits to go
To th' dear city down, Jacob discovers,
And glad for Susannah twice for himself—
He so proud of Jerusalem—gaily precedes.
Susannah taking the hand of Joseph
Follows after. What a beautiful boy
She has to bring home for her mother's blessing.
Now they go down. Now they pray at the gates.
“ Let us go into her gates with praise ! ”
The streets of the city of their God ! Jacob
Trode them as a Hebrew and an upright man
Made glad, and as a son of David.
Sweet Susannah, every turn looks familiar.
Her heart dwells in the home of her husband
Far up in Galilee, but she is returning
With Jacob to-day and bringing Joseph :
And Joseph shared the joy of his mother ;
But shy and silent, fair boy, tall for his years,
He walks by his mother, seeing all these things
For the first time with a modest exultance.

They go up th' street where Susannah's mother
Lives ; in at the little court before the house ;

The servant watching at the gate, hastened
To tell unto Sarah her daughter cometh ;
The aged Sarah, come out to the threshold,
Has fallen upon the neck of her daughter
And kissed her, and welcomed Jacob and brought
Them into her house, where they will abide
During the feast.

Sarah had lived to see a seed
That was goodly, and Susannah was youngest
Of her own born ; and she showed preference
To Joseph, and as he sat at her feet
She told him of Elias his grandfather,
Of his godly life and how well he died,
And spoke of her own death likewise as near,
And expressed the hope to him, he might live
To see the Messiah before he should die ;
And the words of the venerable Sarah
Dropped into the heart of the boy at her feet.
She was pleased moreover with his knowledge
Of the Scriptures and of the traditions
Which had been taught him by his pious parents :
And meantime Joseph went with his parents
Up to the sacrifices and to the prayers
That were offered each day in the temple.

“ I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the sight of all His people : in the courts of the house of the Lord.”

Let us regard Joseph of that same age
As Jesus Christ when he came with his parents
Up to the feast at Jerusalem. Jesus
Will yet come with him up to the temple
As he has come up now with his parents.

It is beautiful to see Joseph kneel
In the very same place where Jesus, a boy
Of the same age, will pray.

Susannah tarried

With Sarah yet some days after the feast,
And when she would return to her own home,
Her mother fell sick and took to her bed,
And that same day she died ; her children
And her children's children gathered around,
And she blest all those, and last, Susannah
And her spouse and Joseph, of whom she foretold
Great things.

Susannah remained for the funeral
Of her mother, and Joseph pondered all
Of these things. It was th' first time he had seen
Death. After this he went with his parents
Up to the feast at Jerusalem every year.



UNDER THE OLIVE TREE.

(Soon after the return from the feast at Jerusalem.)

I.

Through pastures broad and patriarchal,
From vintage and from house to-day,
We track an ancient, fresh field-way.

Sweet wood ! We halt by head of desert-spring,
Seven lilies in white stoles around it ring ;
Here dips the mountain-bird her freckled wing.

The spot where flowers the shy anemone ;
The woodland rose of fairest Galilee,
Here knits around the wild-born olive tree :
A spot so fair and kept so hiddenly,

Is seldom seen. In prayer, and rapt since morn,
What sacred boy, or youth of angel form ?
Half-mystic child, or youth with virtues born,*
Unfolding as some rose upon its native thorn,
In scent and bloom, bright as the saint adorn,

Who lives the ascetic page of life to fill,
From youth to age, the stubborn soil to till
Within the human heart and train the will,
Long-wearing years to suffer and be still,
And find alike our peace in good or ill,
Until we win and climb the Heavenly Hill.

The softest zephyr hushed, no pulse a-beat
In all the hallowed airs surrounding sweet
This paradisial solitude within complete
Where God and nature recollected meet,
And creature love may sigh and free intreat,
Bowed at the here beneficent Creator-Feet ;
Who is it in this holy, hid retreat ?

II.

This dearest nook of all dear Palestine !

* *Vide* Binet's Life of St. Joseph. His ingenuous argument for the pre-sanctification of St. Joseph. If Jeremias had an ante-natal regeneration for his vocation (*Jer.* i, 5), and St. John the Baptist (*Luke* i, 15), would not St. Joseph, whose office was so much nearer to and more intimate with God ?

Below an emerald sward--the freshest moss,
The tree above--its arms a greenwood cross.

The still suggestion here of what's to bide,
The shadow of what other stern hillside--
What other Tree whose type doth here abide.

The brown rocks closed around in quaintly slape,
Where clambering vines the rough sides deftly drape,
And where not mantles yet the mountain grape,
The lichen spreads on higher heights its friendly cape.

Where tree and rock all teach in lesson fair,
And recollectedness distilling everywhere,
The seal of God upon the very air,
A wildwood sanctuary formed for prayer--
His prayer--of this dear spot, my God, what care!

Out-shut, O, other world! take sense thy bound,
Suppress my ear of earth, each sigh, or sound;
Nor spot more closed is out of Eden found:
Grim trees lowered half immutably profound--
Take deep my soul, the picture of this prayer-ground,
Rock, tree--the ancient fir king's cloistered round--

Gnarled trunks that since the primal morn have stood,
Or the dim days that border from the flood,
Th' little spring--chaste nature's tidal life, or blood
Of crystal flow--this precious solitude,
Where all embowered is touched and sealed and good;
Where from the hawk the wild dove flies to brood,
Whose fragrance steals through all the neighboring wood.

III.

Dear Joseph's bower ! This sweetest flower-lined glen !

The violet-blooms on either bank we view ;
Here smiles the pansie-maid in robe of blue,

Or there, in dignity of velvet coronet
And purple cape, soft-streaked in line of jet,
Our lord, the little bishop-violet,

Or there, in tiny, golden buds unrolled,
Each slender stalk a chalice lifts as gold,
Or petals that the sweetest sugars hold,
Nectar in dainty cups of yellow mould.

While Joseph prays upon this violet-floor,
In speechless worship rapt—his eyes before,
With him, sweet flowers, how fragrant 'ye adore,
Whose heart for sweetness to the very core.
Is as your honey-laden brims and more.

And there those heavenlier pansies grow,
The virgins of the violets here blow ;
Th' pearl of flowers, its feet in earth, from below,
Drawing whiteness only, as the snow, or a glow—
Immaculate—one violet-white word, we know,—
Immaculate in hood and dress of snow.

And like those other violets of God,
Those fair retiring flowers of Mary's-rod,
Whose feet, while still to earth, are lovely shod
In peace and stainless from the sordid clod ;
Who tremble at the gay world's slightest nod,
And never shed the delicacy of their sweets abroad,
But bloom as violets white upon th' cloistered sod.

IV.

But hark ! the ardent sweets of adoration !

Poured fervent forth for God, so free, so staunch,
The pure abandon, 'neath the olive-branch :*

' One is the rounded earth and moon, and one
The ever-radiant and light-pouring sun,
And one each virgin life as fresh begun.

' The sun that gives to painted morning birth,
Pours all his light to thee and recollected earth,
Her flowers, and all her streams their generous mirth,
Good God ! in all Thy works there is not dearth.

' One is his earth, one is his sun, his sky,
In grand completeness poured, all offered lie
Beneath the sovereign footstool prone, and cry :
All, all unto the Lord who forms, Most High !
All, all is God's, and God to them forever nigh.

' All move accordant to the upper law ;
I looked in nature and in nature saw
Who pitying hears the feeblest sparrow's caw,
Who mindful fills the wild beast's paw ;
And thus my soul beholding, Lord, with awe
Was touched and hope ; all things unto Thee draw.

*The first account the mystics give of Joseph, he is seen in the vision of one of the saints, at the age of twelve years, praying under an olive tree, when he made the vow of chastity.

‘ Pure as these lilies round, I glad agree
To keep this flesh as flowers their fragraney.
I yield each sense, I proffer ehashity,
Thy favor, Lord, let Thy young servant see!
And in Thy larger kindness, father me;
So let me draw, sweet God, with all to Thee;
Thy virgin son let me forever be!’

V.

What lifted look! what generous pleading!
Feed, soul, upon that tender growing smile,
That halo forming in the airs, erewhile.
In the still airs around that youthful head,
The heaven-sunned lilies double fragrance shed.
Blest spot! a soul to God is being wed!

By high and marvelous as sacred vow,
Never heard from lip of man till now;
Thus a halo, heavenly, widening, rings that brow,
Drop, my soul, in reverence, low in worship bow!

God is raining upon that fair soul light,
And covering it with robe of His own white,
God is giving it His kiss of hidden rite;
Bow and veil in tears thy spotted sight,
Before the ’spousals with the Infinite.

Blest Joseph! love pervades thy atmosphere,
More soft, more rich, in deepened glow more clear,
All the purpled, amber airs appear!
Sing, my soul, with adoring, prudent fear,
Heaven is over-leaning very, very near,
God with Joseph now by grace is infolding here.

God His sweetness in a moment can impart,
Pierce the proffered soul so sweetly with His dart
It is not sacrifice with sense to part,
Or sacrifice is woundless, without smart :
It is only He, but God, that has such art ;
Fresher flowers now or virtue's instant start :
God is doing wonders in that royal heart.

VI.

And none to mark—angelic offering !

None ? The very bee that drones amid the rose
Has stole a secret through the petals half a-close.

The honey-bird will hang suspended o'er the flowers,
The dove will sit in yonder cleft as many hours,
As her wild glen this saint-boy, rapt, embowers.

Her mate the turtle here forgets to moan,
The wandering bee-bird drops her wildering tone,
Nor straying zephyr dares to claim the spot his own,
Where consecrated Joseph kneels to pray alone.

I've said that here the dove forgets her coo,
Nor worldly sound breaks in, nor pasture-loo,
And beast and reptile shun this recess, too,
And all things mutely here to worship woo,
God to adore, is all the soul here knows to do.

No wile can pierce so heavenlyized a spot,
Or Satan's hosts are barred so charmed a grot;
No dart of hell within hath ever shot.
O, blessed spot! by demon eyes forgot.
O, chastest youth! O, fragrant virgin lot!
My soul! Yet there are visitants, we wot,

Or one whose deep eyes shed unutterable things,
Great Raphael,* most human angel, from whose wings
Drop silent lights and sanctities. Thy fathers' offerings,
Thou crownest, boy! Look up, young son of kings,
What joy to thee, what joy to me, thy pure vow brings;
The lingering halo round thy soft brow rings,
And higher up for joy the gladdened heaven sings.

VII.

None to mark, I sighed, none this sacrifice!

When the very world might stop to gaze
And glorious transform in its virgin rays.

None, my soul! Above where the bright stars roll,
There's the Uncreated Child, by his promised dole,
Gazing very interested down upon this soul.

* Tradition does not name, as we are aware, the guardian angel of St. Joseph. St. Gabriel being the angel guardian of Mary and St. Michael of the Divine Humanity of our Lord, who of the angels may so like be supposed to be the angel guardian of Joseph as St. Raphael? Who among the angels and Joseph does there seem such similarity between, as between Raphael and St. Joseph?

Sees the shades of Nazareth, where sweet shall rest
His Infant Brow on that fond, fervent breast,
Incarnate Love within those kind arms prest,
And for his destiny the praying boy is blest.

Who earliest bids to sense a saint's adieus,
Who gives to God each pulse shall never lose,
Who gives to God, the good, doth wisely choose,
And God from hence His sweet prize dearer views,
And hence some tender crowning of His dew.

Vision of peace! youth of twelve summers mild
And fair, thy sanctity hath my poor heart beguiled.
Neath the lone olive in this solitary wild,
I see the guardian of the Immortal Child,
To whom the Eternal Babe looked down and smiled.
God keep thee, as He will, as now, His undefiled.

But how this dear life opened for our view
At this fair page, how smiling onward grew,
Unfolded close with God, none ever knew,
So hidden and so holily to God it drew.
We only know it must have kept the morning hue,
The early sweetness of celestial dew,
Its fervency, its faith, its troth, angelic true.

“BY THY CHASTITY, ST. JOSEPH, PRAY FOR US.”



SAINT JOSEPH A BROTHER.

(An imaginary glimpse of St. Joseph, not long after he had made his vow, shewing his little sister through the hedge and olive wood beyond.)

SOBA.

The hawthorn is the lady of the hedge,
Brother; the blossoms are ruddy and white.
How beautiful!

JOSEPH.

Red is the color of charity.
Thou knowest the commandment, little sister?

SOBA.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.” Our father
Teaches it in the porch on Sabbath nights.
I shall remember it alway—the white now, Joseph?

JOSEPH.

One is my perfect one and immaculate.

SOBA.

All hath sin, Joseph, all, my brother, saith
Jacob, our father—the trail of the serpent.

JOSEPH.

A woman shall crush the snake, a woman,
Little sister, and there shall be one born,
If she is not alive now upon the earth,
She shall be white.

SOBA.

So is it beautiful,
A woman, to be, though men think not so;
Beautiful! for she will be of our sex.

JOSEPH.

Even so : All women lift to englorify :
The moon rises to walk the floor of heaven,
And all the stars arise to with her walk :
Virgins shall arise and walk with her as stars—
The Lily of the Lord and of Israel !

(Coming to paths bordered with violets.)

SOBA.

Blessed be the forest ! See the violets,
Brother !

JOSEPH.

The yellow is gathered for its sugar,
Which is distilled by an art from its flowers
That is known unto the perfume-maker
And famed and precious with apothecaries.
The purple is larger.

SOBA.

And grander, Joseph ;
And you always bring purple violets
For your nosegays for the synagogue.
I gather all that is beautiful. I cannot leave
Anything beautiful, such is my passion.
I bring the rose-color, the blue, the golden,
You but violet-blows and white lilies ;
And, Joseph, your offering is always sweetest.
Do you gather them here ?

Beautiful ! Beautiful !

[Joseph was shewing Soba the violet-glen :
Joseph was parting the bough of a tree—
Soba peering in—but she entered not in
And Joseph went not in, for it was, th' spot,

As the sanctuary of a vow: But Joseph
Could not be selfish. He told none his vow,
But he parted the boughs and Soba looked,
And she saw it was beautiful; but she saw
Not as Joseph; and they turned from the glen,
And in the borders of the wood they sat
Under a sycamore tree, and Joseph
Shewed unto his sister a list of the trees
Mentioned in Scripture that he had made out
With the scribe at the synagogue, who taught
Him letters; and Soba listened, and Joseph
Described all the trees from Deborah's palm
To the oaks of Bashan, the almug and fir,
Th' trees of th' wood and of Solomon's gardens,
All thereby more sacred for the Holy Ghost
Having left them pictured upon the leaves
Of the word of God.]

JOSEPH.

“As the apple tree
Among the trees of the wood, so is my love
Among the daughters.”

SOBA.

And the rabbin thinks
The time near?

JOSEPH.

Near.

SOBA.

May our eyes live to see
Her.

JOSEPH.

May we live to see her! She shall bring
Peace.

SOBA.

And be very pure!

JOSEPH.

What should the mother
Of the Messiah-King be?

SOBA.

Very fair ?

JOSEPH.

As the hawthorn full of flowers, "the mother
Of fair love." She will be, little sister,
As the clove among the trees of the wood.

(A long pause.)

SOBA.

How beautiful must God be !

JOSEPH.

How beautiful !



AFTER TWELVE YEARS OLD.

"We know nothing of the beginnings of this wonderful Saint. Like the fountains of the sacred river of the Egyptians, his early years are hidden in obscurity which his subsequent greatness renders beautiful."—*Faber*.

THE days passed from his twelfth year, the lad
Growing in humility and holiness;
It must have been, albeit we have no record,
Save as we know by the tint of the fruit
Of the summer. Says one who loved Joseph :

"God pressed him closely to Himself as a mother almost hides her child in her bosom by the closeness of her embrace. He communicated with God in his hours of sleep as if his sleep was but the mystical slumber of contemplation. . . . We cannot describe his holiness, because it was not only holier in degree than that of the saints, also different in kind, but it was eminently hidden with God. . . . One of God's eternal ideas . . . which He most cherished and kept near to Himself. . . . He was doubtless high in sanctity before his espousals with Mary. God's eternal choice of him would seem to imply as much."

It seems such was, must have been, his goodness
Whom God honored with a choice, I know not
Whether more sweet and more admirable
Than that other vocation to be Mary's sire :
To be the father of the Virgin Mary !
To be the father of the Queen of Heaven !
Only as th' supernatural is above th' natural,
Only as Joachim lived three years with Mary
And Joseph thirty—a flower sprang from his root,
An aged man bent over it, his dear blossom !
For three years ; then it was given to the Lord ;
The old Patriarch came to see it for ten years,
And then he died : was transplanted to wait
For it ; and the precious flower was removed
To the hidden garden of one who preserved
All its leaves white and cherished it for God
Thirty years. One lived with Mary and one
Lived with Jesus and Mary—I know not.
Both belonged to the family of God.
One begat Mary—one represented God
And was her husband, these two fathers
Of the family of the Lord. Joseph
Was one, and he was not as other men
That are honored, but as surpassing king,
Or patriarch, apostle, or prophet—
He was the one chosen to be the spouse
Of God's own dear mother.

But we may suppose,
As each man in Israel taught some trade
To his son, that Jacob taught to Joseph,
His own craft-work, that of a carpenter ;

And when Joseph had come to the estate
Of a man, making no household of his own,
He continued to serve with his father,
And to toil for him.

Behold and imagine
Joseph going with Jacob to fell trees
Upon the mountains beyond. Joseph carried
His own axe and the axe of his father,
And Joseph would not suffer his father
To bear any burden that he might bear.
They had profitable conversation
By the way; then would walk meditating.
Come to the mountain, Jacob selected trees
To fell, large turpentine trees that they made
Floorings of and yokes and ploughs; then Joseph
Would make his father rest while he felled the trees.
And Jacob took great pride in his son,
And Joseph was a stay and a comfort
Unto him. And but one thing troubled Jacob;
But this troubled him sore, as may be seen
In our next chapter. Good, old patriarch!

“Our advocate, St. Joseph, hear us!”
Our helper, St. Joseph, help us!



THE TRIAL OF JACOB.

(Eve of Cleophas' marriage.)

JACOB.

Our youngest son taken a spouse and not
The elder!

SUSANNAH.

Dear Joseph!

JACOB.

He should have sons
Growing now and daughters ready for marriage.

SUSANNAH.

Joseph is upright, his heart the Lord keeps.

JACOB.

Is he as Abraham, or more? Our fathers
Had spouses and so is their seed, goodly
In number, spread over the land abroad.

SUSANNAH.

(With a sigh.)

It is true; but his heart, the Lord keeps.

JACOB.

Kept he not the heart of Isaac and Jacob?
And Jacob had two spouses and twelve sons.
I've no patience with this new kind of goodness:
It is not patriarchal. I thought to see
Joseph settled; I shall die and not see
My first born's spousals.

SUSANNAH.

I would that our son
Would take to him a spouse, he would make
Such a father in Israel.

JACOB.

Cleophas

And his other brethren have not despised
The custom of their fathers, even the last
Of his brethren, and he shall be blest.
His father before he die shall take delight
In his seed. Are there no maidens in Judah
That are fair? That my son should have no spouse?
Alas! that I must go hence and the son
Of my first born not having sat on my knees,
And that my right hand lie not on the head
Of his seed and bless him when I die! Alas,
Our first born, his inheritance will fall
To his brethren; his portion will others take;
And he shall have no name or remembrance
In Israel, for he refused to raise up seed
Unto Jacob.

SUSANNAH.

Dear Joseph! But let not Jacob,
My lord, be sad, he hath many children.

JACOB.

But they are not my first born!

[Susannah

Sighed here. How could she, dear mother, comfort
Jacob whose heart was set upon Joseph?
But after a time Jacob came to take
Solace in the children born to Cleophas,
Who with Mary, his spouse, dwelt in his house;
Yet ceased not t' regret Joseph took no wife.
It was a grief, also, to Susannah,
But her heart clave each day more to Joseph,
And so sought excuses, dear, true mother,
When Jacob lamented; and it displeased not
Jacob, for his heart was tender toward his son,
Only he could fault him.

And Joseph remained
 With them, and by th' toil of his hands assisted
 His parents, and the beautiful years ripened,
 And Joseph grew in wisdom and sanctities.
 My God, how good can Saint Joseph still grow!
 And Saint Joseph grew good and the more holy,
 Th' more humble, and, if possible, the more hidden.]

"Saint Joseph was such a saint as the world had never seen before. . . . St. Joseph was deeply imbedded in the divine light."
Bethlehem—FABER.



15, B. C.

ST. JOSEPH THE MORNING THAT THE BLESSED VIRGIN WAS BORN.

"Beautiful as an unexpected sunrise, seen suddenly as we turn out of the dark defiles of a mountain pass, was the nativity of Mary."—*The Precious Blood*.

"If thou art a young man, and art to have a wife, she is now living upon the earth, therefore, pray for her."—*Proverbial Philosophy*.

THERE is a saint on the hills of Galilee,
 His fervor, this morn, it is fervor to see:
 O! ever the morning has dappled the east,
 He is up and away for this mystical feast.

Up and away, though he knows not why
 The shadows of night so hasten to fly,
 Why the beams are out ere the morn hath rose
 And the east a-glow as an opal or rose.

O! never before so sweet has he felt
 The airs at prayer around him to melt;
 He watches the burst in the Orient sky—
 His heart is a-flame, though he knows not why.

Dear spirit so tender, so ardent, so true,
Ever so ready for God, yet never it knew
The sweetness and light that drops from this sky,
That comes to him most, though he knows not why.

O! dear, meantime, to our heart and clear to our eyes
To gaze on the sign of those hues from the skies;
Upward and back with what joy to look and to see
Our saint as he walks on the hillside of old Galilee.

To see Joseph a-watch and then hasten to greet
That child of the Hill of Frankincense sweet—
The smile of the babe that knows not sin,
The Star of the Morning, this morn ushered in.

One kiss for her feet, and back to Joseph this morn,
Who bows to the sod the moment she is born:
Whose spirit has caught some flash of the truth
And bows in the flush of a mid-day youth.

Beautiful morning! a daughter has birth
That lights the smile of the whole-touched earth;
Beautiful morning! the Moon's in the sky,
The Moon of the world and the Sun is nigh!

Aurora for her mother's feast,
An hour before th' usual dawn, at least,
Strewed all her roses in the east,

All splendors of her morns untold—
No pearl unsought, no cloud of gold,
Her radiant fingers left unrolled.

Awake to richer bloom, O earth !
Bud whiter flowers, O laggard turf !
The Rose Immaculate has birth !

Join, favored soul, with bird and bee !
Shall field and sky chime sympathy,
And Joseph pray, nor song from thee ?

The earth is now by its new Rainbow spanned,
Whose beauteous ends dip to the utmost land.

The Dove that seeks the olive-branch is out :
Look up, at length, O drownéd world and shout !

The little Ark of Covenant glides o'er the wave,
My God ! let waters kind her sweet prow lave.

Joseph standing yet still upon his knees,
The still, illuminative sky flashing
All over his rapt, beautiful countenance—
Sweet saint-man, almost divining, yet not.
What one angel, face most human-like,
Overbends Joseph in the air, gazing
Upon the face of our dear Saint, so touched
With hope—that hope that was born with Mary ?
It is his angel made with him visible ;
Saint Joseph and his angel, outbeaming
On that grand hillside together this morning.
What must it be to be the dear angel
Of a soul that shall be saved ? What, then,
To have been the angel-guardian of Joseph ?
Wonderful Raphael ! Did not his brothers,
The angels, envy the mission of Raphael ?

- “ He is glorious mid the angels
Midst the highest there in Heaven,
Standing almost in the furnace
One of God’s selected seven.
- “ He is special in his beauty,
Like unto him there is none,
Tender, patient and pathetic,
Dear Saint Raphael stands alone.
- “ He hath drank of that one fountain
In the Godhead’s placid breast,
Till his beautiful broad spirit
Is with love of man possess.
- “ O, to look upon his beauty,
Even in Heaven so passing fair !
God Himself, O bright archangel,
Deems thee bright beyond compare.
- “ Thou hast loved us like the Father,
With an unbought love, and free ;
Like the Father’s pensive sweetness,
Is the love of man to thee.
- “ Thou hast loved us with that longing
Which so wrought upon the Word,
That He took our flesh upon Him,
And our race to thine preferred.
- “ Yet the Person of the Spirit
Is reflected most in thee,
With thy fires and consolations,
And man-loving jubilee.
- “ For thy proper gift is gladness,
And thy nature is so sweet,
Thou art made to be the shadow
Of the unmade Paraclete.
- “ It is God’s exceeding pathos
Which has tuned thy spirit thus,
It is God’s exceeding sweetness
Which inclines thee so to us.
- “ Like the human heart of Jesus,
Thou art loving man alway ;
Like the character of Mary
Is thy fashion and thy way.

“Thou wouldst long to be incarnate,
So to share the Saviour's part;
For the angel's spirit in thee,
Beateth strangely like a heart.

“O, thou human-hearted seraph!
How I long to see thy face,
When in silent showers of beauty
God bedews thee with his grace.

“But I see thee now in spirit,
Mid the Godhead's silent springs,
With a soft eternal sunset,
Sleeping ever on thy wings.”

Lo, we see thee now in spirit,
With our blessed Joseph knelt,
On the hillside over Jacob's house;
And our heart does in us melt—

Melt and burn;—and which is fairest,
Angel Raphael, Joseph's face?
Man so like an angel, angel so
Like man—each of sweetest grace?

Raphael and Joseph!
Mary comes this morn!
Earth is growing lovely
Very fast—hope new born.

“Perhaps there is not among the divine mysteries one of such unblemished gladness, of such unmixed joy, as the nativity of our Blessed Mother. It was like Bethlehem without those grave foreshadowings of Calvary, which give to Bethlehem such pathetic solemnity. The birth of Mary was like the mystery of the unfallen world. It was the sort of mystery unfallen worlds would keep.”—*The Precious Blood*—FABER.

FIRST FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF
MARY.

“Glad day whose fame from Mary’s name
Like light from Heaven serenely came.”—*Ave Maria*.

(A messenger having just brought the tidings of Mary’s birth and an invitation to Susannah and her house to the feast of the naming at the house of Anna.)

SUSANNAH, filled with exultance, entered
Straightway the shop where Jacob and Joseph
Wrought, making yokes, and communicated
To them the good news that the man had brought,
And Jacob rejoiced for th’ same, but Joseph
Cast down his eyes as his mother spake. Then
Susannah said, “Wilt thou wait for a wife
Till she is grown?” And Jacob, when Joseph
Answered not, but turned away and blushed,
Answered with bitterness, “He will wait.”

Susannah made up a present to send,
But desired that Cleophas and Mary
Should go up in her stead and her husband’s,
As they were too old for much journeying.

The pious kinswomen of Anna rejoice
Over the cradle of the infant Mary,
Fairest spot on the new-brightened earth!
There is another spot the next dearest
On th’ hills of Galilee—on a little farm:
A carpenter’s shop—a bench by the wall,
And by it a peaceful and gracious man,

Who may be passed a little th' flower of life—
 Stepping over a little to the autumn side:
 An old man with snowy beard sits at th' end
 Of the bench watching the movements of th' plane
 In th' hand of th' peaceful, gracious carpenter,
 Observant from habit of th' smooth turning—
 Sees every curve and finish of the plane;
 Unusually meditative, cheerful old sire:
 Jacob and Joseph.

Susannah sits by th' wheel

In her house, the peach-bloom on her cheek:
 Her once rosy, young face always kept fair
 For its sweetness. Susannah always had been
 One of those mothers and wives half a lily
 And half a rose. Th' name of Susannah is
 By interpretation a lily. Susannah was
 By her chastity as th' lily, by her blush
 And her modesty as the rose. To-day
 Her heart prays for Anna and the dear babe—
 Joseph's mother thanking God for the birth
 Of Mary. Sweet Susannah!

Meantime, clothed

In musings, happy old Jacob breaking out
 This day rather frequent into some exclaim
 Of praise; for Joachim was as a brother—
 Some do say that he was his brother—
 It were sweet to think it were so.

Meantime

Joseph, rapt in his own meditation,
 Quietly planing away at some tiles.
 Beautiful babe upon th' Hill of Nazareth
 Being named this morning or afternoon;

Grave Joseph, the carpenter in the shop
Of Jacob, shoving seriously the plane,
A new grace to-day brooding its white wings
In his heart. How can he stay from Mary?
How can he stay from that heir of sweet hope
The family of Judah gather round?
Who would not rather have supposed Joseph,
This most spiritual man of his tribe,
To have been the first to do her honor?
Joseph is too humble—God is preparing
Joseph. He went not up, his beautiful hour
Being not yet come, most sweet-retiring man.

“ST. JOSEPH, MOST PROFOUND IN HUMILITY, PRAY FOR US.”

And Mary-Cleophas having returned,
Talked much of the loveliness of the babe,
And told its name, which, being mentioned,
Dropped into Joseph's heart. His eyes, his brows,
His whole countenance has a softer shade.

“Sweet name of Mary, gift of God's grace,
Light of the weary, smile of His face,
Ray of His pity, chord of His lyre,
Moon of God's city, warmth of love's fire:
Sweet name of Mary, hope of our race,
Flower of life's dreary, sad desert-place,
When our hearts, sighing at the last hour,
Tremble at dying, show us thy power.”—*Ave Maria.*



ST. JOSEPH AT MARY'S PRESENTATION.

THE FIRST TIME SAINT JOSEPH SAW THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
AND HIS PRESENCE AT HER PRESENTATION.

"The patriarchal line
Hath told of thee, since first creation's hour;
The prophets chant in imagery divine
Of thee, sweet Flower."

"Dove of God's ark, fair Sharon's mystic tree."

JOSEPH, sire of the saints in Paradise,
Remembers to-day, the first time he saw
Mary. It was one of the serenest days
In the late summer, and he had come
To Nazareth for some carpenter-work.
It is told in the "*Rosa Immaculata*,"
Wherein we see Joseph coming to the well
Of the town, and Miriam, a young damsel,
Letting down her pitcher to give him drink.
They see a man and woman coming down the hill;
A child with them, seated upon an ass.
The grave, communicative little maid
Informs Joseph, Mary is going to be carried
Up to the temple to be brought up there.

"O, purest lily-bud that grew
In Nazareth's blessed shade!

"We look into thy dove-like eyes,
Thy gentle smiling face,
And wait not Gabriel to tell
That thou art full of grace."

—*Marié of San Francisco.*

The parties have met—and the dear party
Of Joachim's having departed, Joseph
Longed to go up to this presentation.

"ST. JOSEPH, FILLED WITH THE BLESSING OF HEAVEN, PRAY
FOR US."

THE LITTLE BLESSED VIRGIN'S CONSECRATION.

" In Juda's gorgeous temple where the sons of Levi stand
Near the gold and crimson-curtained ark of Israel's sacred land,
Kneels a child—a lovely child—the fairest earth had ever seen,
Like a flash of living beauty, that Star of Palestine."

" O, Joachim! O, Anna, mild!
O, parents of the undefiled!
Resign with joy that chosen child.

" For safe behind the latticed screen,
She shall grow up by men unseen,
A lily, pure and most serene."

" She vows her soul's first purity to God, with childhood's voice,
That purity immaculate, that bids the world rejoice."

—*Ave Maria.*

Sedate, retiring Joseph, while the vow
Is being said, hid half by a pillar
In the court. God knows thee and thou art marked,
God loves Mary and God appreciates
Thee, Joseph. "It is something to be appreciated
Of God." And O to be so unconscious
And so destined! Watch th' face of St Joseph
As the ceremonial goes on—when ended
And the holy doors shut in the pure child.

" O latticed doors which ope and close
Upon that tiny virgin rose,
Ye could not hide her if ye chose!

" O temple-walls which stretch away,
Majestic in the golden day,
Ye cannot shut her in for aye!"

It was admirable, was it not, for Joseph
To be at the presentation of Mary—
The consecration of his predestined spouse—
His now in th' eyes of Heaven—his fair child-spouse?
But here Joseph shrinks again into the shades.

We see no more of Saint Joseph for years.
O, man most hidden with God ! not one word
He spoke even recorded in the Gospels.

“ Silence has ever been as it were the luxury of great holiness, which implies that it contains something divine within itself.

“ Of all sanctities in the Church, St. Joseph is that which lies the deepest down, and it is the hardest to see distinctly.”—*Bethlehem*.

We see only the holy little maid now
Of the temple, over whose beautiful head
He shall one day cast his mantle, grow up
In the courts of prayer, and seem for the time
To forget the patriarch of th' hidden life,
To watch the precious Rose Immaculate
Bud and bloom in the spring of her odors,
In th' recesses of th' cloisters that are sacred,
In the chambers of the virgins, spinning
With the almahs on th' wheel Anna had spun
Upon when a young girl in the chambers
Of the almahs—Mary's mother. We watch
The sweet opening of the Rose of Nazareth
In Sion till we see her come to the flower
Of her maidenhood, “ th' rose-tree in Jericho,”
To her stature “ as a young palm in Cades,”
To that period venerable Epiphamus,
With a saint's pencil, paints her presence : “ Tall,”
Somewhat above the height of woman, “ face
Of that fine oval and delicateness in mould
Which characterizes the Jewish women ;”
“ Eyes,” color “ a soft hazel ” and a heavenly look,
“ Lips,” “ a ripe coral berry ;” and whom Dennis,
The learned Areopagite, who had seen
Her beauty—the face of the Mother of Christ—

In his sweet writing, says in a rapture :
 “And she was of a beauty so dazzling,
 I would have worshipped her as a goddess,
 Only that I knew there is but one God.”

This fragrant tree, planted for Paradise
 Upon th’ earth, this virgin for God, we see
 Developing in her white-rose-like charms,
 Till she comes to a comeliness commanding
 The pencil of Luke and of Raphael,
 And left still untraced to be seen but in Heaven,
 And there only on the throne of the Mother
 Of God. We forget all but Mary, fair rose,
 Till surprised by the priests sending word in
 To this most chaste and consecrate Virgin,
 It was time she should prepare for a spouse,
 When we learn of her desires to remain
 In the house of the Lord, and her sorrow
 And beseechings, even to the revealing
 Of her vow to Zachary, and how he laid
 It before the priests, and they sat in council.



SHALL MARY HAVE A SPOUSE?

“As fair as the rose ’mid Jerusalem’s daughters,
 As bright as the lily by Jordan’s blue wave.”—*Clonfert.*
 “Ordnated to bring a Saviour into birth,
 O, blessed one! On thee all hopes had centered.”—*E. H. B.*

THE council of the priests—the High Priest sat
 Upon an elevated dias; Zachary
 And another chief priest, one on his right,

One on his left. Seven upon either hand—
Fifteen of the priests in all—the count
To be of the decades in her rosary.
The High Priest,—the white linen garment,
With the sacred girdle and the tunic
Of violet over, and over the tunic
The ephod, and fitted by the girdle
To the rational, on which was doctrine
And truth, with the mitre upon his head,
And upon the mitre over the forehead
The plate consecrated with sanctification.*
The chief priests, vested likewise with tunics,
Were girded with girdles and had mitres on.

HIGH PRIEST.

Shall Mary, the almah, as she hath made
Request unto us, and hath the desire
That is pious, remain at the altars,
Or, as is the custom in Israel,
Be given unto a spouse? Ben Aaron!

BEN AARON.

The request of the daughter of the king
Should be mentioned with honor. The desire
Of the daughters of kings should be weighed.
Were the virgin of a mean line her vow
Might be granted; but the eyes of th' people—
As the eyes of a maid into the hands
Of her mistress—look unto the daughters
Of David to bear princes and rulers
For Israel.

* Leviticus—Dress of the Jewish priesthood.

BEN ELEAZER (*aside*).

(A very old priest outside the Council. The same who was the grandsire of Anna, companion of Mary in the temple.—*Rosa Immaculata*.)

The Lord guideth Mary !

BEN JONATHAN.

The praise of Joachim is within the gates,
And Anna, her mother, is commended.
A stalk so goodly should not die in Israel.

BEN ELEAZER (*aside*).

Whatever Mary doth, the Lord guideth !

BEN ELIAKIM.

The Virgin is diligent, and her hands
Praise her. She embroidereth for the priests.
Who doth cunning-work like Mary ? How can
We spare her ? But she will teach her maidens
Her art. Her daughters shall be a pattern
To th' daughters of the Lord, therefore should
She be set over a house in Israel.

BEN ELI.

But, none maketh such incense as Mary,
That she may make the sweet-smelling fragrance
For the censers, should we not keep th' Virgin ?
Who so setteth the chambers in order,
And who so edifieth the almahs
In neatness and in appropriateness ?
Her distaff hangs perpendicular on th' wall ;
Her wheel sitteth in its place—the spinning
Being done, th' skeins knotted. Mary keepeth
All things fitly. She doeth all things comely ;

The folds of her robe fall round her in grace ;
She shall teach all our daughters comeliness ;
She shall learn her neighbors by her example ;
It is well for slovenliness in Israel,
Is a sin.

BEN ELEAZER (*aside*).

Let us never thwart Mary.

BEN SAMUEL.

Nothing in Mary's hand runneth to waste ;
She will look well to the ways of her house.
The prudent woman, " her household eateth
The bread of carefulness : " want is not known
In her borders. That Mary is prudent,
Should she have an establishment in Israel.

BEN TOBIAS.

The Virgin openeth her hand to the poor :
That the needy find help, the destitute
Want not, that the poor be fed. Should Mary
Be a mistress in the house of her husband ?

BEN ELEAZER (*aside*).

Mary always doeth excellently.

BEN ENOCH.

The Virgin may be called daughter of peace.
Discord shall not approach unto her dwelling ;
But the brawling woman shall of her learn
And be ashamed. Peace shall live in her house,
And quiet with her dwell, and her borders
Shall be enlarged—her tent cover more ground.

BEN SOLOMON.

The Virgin is wise ; “ the heart of her husband
Shall in her trust ; ” “ Her children shall rise up
And do her honor. ” Her neighbors seeing
Her wisdom shall depart from foolishness.

BEN DANIEL.

The Virgin has been so well instructed
In the scriptures, she shall instruct her sons
And her daughters and they that with her dwell.

BEN NATHAN.

Mary is so obedient, doeth all things
So cheerful ; she would be such a model
For all wives.

BEN EZEKIEL.

Mary is so persevering,
Doeth all things with such continuity.

BEN MOSES.

Mary is so modest ; so shall her maidens
Stand aròund her as lilies.

BEN DAVID.

And, Mary
So loveth Sion and the gates of the house
Of her God, the altars and the Holy Place ;
She will teach those who draw unto her nigh,
To remember th’ feasts in the House of the Lord ;
And devotion shall spread among th’ people ;
Therefore, should she be the wife of one great
In Judah and honored in Jerusalem.

ZACHARY.

Amen !

HIGH PRIEST.

And we do look for the Messiah-King
 In our day, and Mary is more excellent
 Than all the virgins, therefore must she be given
 In marriage.

[And so were her virtues brought
 Against her; even then as unto this day,
 No one could ever find aught but virtues
 T' bring against Mary, sweet maid, sweet mother.
 So was her vow annulled by the High Priest,
 Or so pronounced; and Zachary communicated
 It to her, and commanded also th' Virgin,
 "Be of cheer!" But Mary was depressed and wept
 Before th' Lord; otherwise, she made no words;
 But in the evening she went to the well
 Of the gardens to draw water for her cell,
 And while there she heard a voice that made known
 To her she ought to consent to marriage;*
 And straightway she came up from the fountaia
 In her peace. The virgins, her companions,
 And the mistresses saw her no more sad,
 And had great joy; for the friends of Mary
 Are always in grief when she is made sad.
 The sorrow of Mary always touches
 All those who love Mary. In her household,
 All hearts beat after th' heart of the mother:
 And the virgins saw that she was the same
 As before her sorrow came, or the calm
 Where all had been full a little more full,
 The completeness a little more complete,
 Th' loveliness of peacefulness had deepened,
 Only as it could deepen in Mary;
 Or Mary had passed through another one
 Of her culminations, beautiful, saintly,
 Mystical maiden, developing as God
 Touches. Immaculate in conception,
 Ever growing immaculate—as the moon
 Grows, "Fair as the moon."—*Pulchra ut luna.*]

And this night did the priests assemble,
 It being ruled Mary should be espoused;
 But unto whom, said they, shall the Virgin
 Be given? Who shall possess this jewel

* Sister Emerich's visions.

Of the line of kings, this most lovely rose
Of the temple? And they made search that night
In th' records and genealogies, and in th' tribe
Of Judah sought the name of such as had
No wife, and in th' morning while yet early
Sent messengers commanding them to come
In the name of the Lord to the temple;
For unto none but to the noblest man
In Israel and most worthy might the Virgin
Be given. And all, each one, whatsoever
He was doing as the messenger came,
The same left and came straightway; and all
Being assembled within the temple
Zachary stood up and spake for the priests:

Men and brethren, ye see how that Joachim,
A just man in Israel, died, leaving
But one issue, and the child being fair,
So that none like her was found in Israel,
Was confided to th' temple and to the care
Of the priests; and unto her is given
One-third of the inheritance of Joachim,
And it is great. But the virgin is herself
Of great price, above all silver and gold;
And she hath been, too, holily brought up
In th' cloisters, and in wisdom and prudence,
And in modesty and sweetness surpasseth
All the virgins of the temple; and, moreover,
She is royal, ye well know, both on the side
Of her father and on the side of her mother—
A widow who liveth holily. Likewise,
The portion of Anna will be given

To her child: but she is herself the dower,
 She is her own exceeding great reward;
 And we have called ye together this day
 That from among ye, her kinsmen and tribe,
 One may be chosen worthy to espouse
 So fair a lily of the house and lineage
 Of David. Let all such as would possess
 This gem of purity and of holiness
 And of beauty, above all other virgins
 Be present before the Lord at sunrise.'



MARY IN THE ASSEMBLY OF HER KINSMEN.

AND the kinsmen of Mary, who had come
 A To the temple, were present at sunrise
 With sacrifice. And after the morning prayers,
 Being then assembled, Mary was brought
 Into the midst; but the Virgin was veiled
 And Anna th' matron, who was likewise veiled,
 Accompanied her, and the priests received
 Them with honor and gave to them a seat.
 Now the Virgin would have known confusion,
 Albeit, she was veiled, but she remembered
 The Voice and the words she heard by the well,
 And its peace assured her, and she thought but,
 "*It is of the Lord!*" Behold His handmaid!
 And a holiness diffused in the air
 As she entered, and all her kinsmen arose
 To do her reverence and remained standing
 Until she was seated, and then Zachary
 Unto whom Joachim had confided

The chief care of Mary, and was her kinsman ;
Said unto Mary, these are all thy brethren
And good men of thy tribe, and unto one,
Thou art to be espoused, according to the law
Of Moses and Israel, fear not my daughter,
Th' Lord shall guide this matter ; and, he proposed
That she should make unto those that aspired
To her hand any such question as seemed
Unto her good ; and Mary through Zachary
Asked such a question, and the question was
“ *What is that which most adorneth a woman ?* ”

Now there was among those who sought the hand
Of this beautiful, incomparable Virgin,
One by the name of Agabus, and he was
A young man of a good family and heir
Of his house, and he was very rich and had
Great possessions, and he was very tall,
And handsome of countenance and his bearing
Such as finds favor in the eyes of woman,
And he was of good repute and desired
Mary ; for he had watched from his house-top,
And seen her as she came out in the twilight
To draw water at the well, and he had heard
Her voice in the choir when the almahs sang
Behind their lattice in the temple, and came
Every morning and evening to the prayers,
That he might hear her sing ; and her virtues
And her beauty, were they not spoken of
Through all Jerusalem ? and he coveted
Her, and who could compete with him ? He made
A sacrifice that was magnificent,

And thought he should win, and so likewise
Thought the priests.

And the question,
Mary had proposed, being asked, one said
An honorable and a royal birth ;
Another by her garments of beauty—
Necklaces, bracelets, rings,—so should one make
A spouse fair ; and such a one considering
The vanity of woman, so thought to please ;
Another said by her sweetness of manner ;
And he regarded to please by something
In herself—he understood flattery,
But the more subtley ; and another said
For delicateness ; one for beauty ;
One her wisdom ; one prudence, industry,
Cheerfulness ; all gave different answers ;
Agabus thinking of her singing said,
The melody of her lips, so shall her words
Ravish the heart of her husband. One man
Only had not answered, who was aged,
Or in comparison with those who presented
Themselves with him—and sat at the lower end
Of the audience-room, and had no thought
To find favor in th' eyes of any one,
Much less of that fair young flower of his line,
And who had not thought to have appeared
And to have come in with his brethren there ;
But being in the city following his trade—
Doing some carpenter-work—th' messenger
Sought him out and pressed him ; and the others
Having spoken, he being questioned, answered
With sweetness, “ *Chastity*,” and Agabus

Laughed in his pride, and a part of those laughed
Who surrounded Agabus; but the answer
Pleased Mary. She spoke not as yet, but showed
That she was pleased, for she drew a lily
She carried in her hand under her veil
And kissed it.

And Agabus, disturbed, arose;
But doubting not that he should persuade
The maiden, told of his wealth and promised
Unto her the key of all his treasures,
And that he would add unto her dowry
Silver and gold as dust, silks of Persia,
Sapphires and diamonds and cups of gold,
And th' perfumes and tapestries of the East
For her pavilion. In fine, what would he not
Of his wealth and of his great inheritance
Bestow on his espoused; and more than all,
That which is dear to woman, would he not
Worship her? and should not all of his house
Bow down unto her beauty and dignity
And sweetness, and do reverence and worship
Her, and her lord more than all?

But Mary
Was in no wise discomposed by the words
Of Agabus, for the Lord held her heart.

Not a wave of his passion swept over the lake of her breast,
Her heart in the midst of its calm was moored and at rest.

And when Agabus ended there was silence
For a time, and all felt the silence; but none
Did break in upon it, till suddenly

The High Priest remembered and to them spake.
‘Lo it cometh unto me now, brethren—
In the night-time, while yet upon my bed,
I had a dream, and in the morning could
No more remember the vision and th’ same
Troubled me; but the Lord maketh me now
To remember, and the vision was this:
‘I heard one call unto me in my sleep,
And the voice was the voice of the angel
Of the Lord; and the angel appeared and talked
With me concerning the daughter of Joachim,
And I saw before me in the vision then
This assembly, and each man with a rod
In his hand; and the angel said to me, let
The rods these men hold be given into th’ hands
Of the priests, that the rods may be lain up
Before me; that so in my house it be shown
Unto whom my handmaid shall be given.
Prepare ye therefore rods for the morning
As the sun goeth down.’ And this word pleased.
That th’ Lord select, or all save Agabus,
Who was troubled, yet had hope—for the hearts
Of all were touched holily by the presence
Of Mary, and each one felt unworthy;
But Agabus doubled his sacrifices
That evening and that morning after,
While the others sacrificed as before;
Joseph with the others, though his offering
Was not noticeable, for he was poor.
He had so made himself by his charities.

“ST. JOSEPH, ACCOMPLISHED MODEL OF AN INTERIOR LIFE,
PRAY FOR US.”

THE LAYING UP OF THE RODS.

AND the rods they brought, those calm Jewish men,
And awaited in prayer till the sunrise then ;
And all were green with some leaf, or some spray,
Save one that was stripped, or withered away ;
And each had chose from the cedar or palm,
Or some wood with a scent of spice, or balm,
But, Joseph who chose from the aspen his rod ;
' For it trembles,' he said, ' 'neath the eyes of God ;'
And to satisfy with his act his vow,
Had made to pass through the fire his bough.

And th' rods lay that night in the tabernacle,
And th' name of each man was upon his rod ;
And Joseph prayed before the Lord, and thought not
To pray for himself, but prayed for Mary
And for the just man, who should find favor
In the eyes of the Lord, and who should win
That incomparable pearl, all concurred
Who knew her in naming a pure white dove ;
And he knew not that it was morning,
Till the golden trumpets blew for prayers

And the sacrifice progressed and the prayers
Were made, and Mary sang with the almahs
In the choir, and Agabus wrapped his face
In the folds of his mantle and stood
To listen : one voice as a silver lute
Sighing through all, swept the heart of Agabus.
And th' sacrifices and prayers being ended,
And all of those contesting for Mary,
Awaiting the manifestation of th' rods ;

Joseph in meekness is bowed with them there ;
No soul in that crowd so rapt in his prayer ;
He, by obedience, who had only come in ;
Who had not a thought that pearl of all women to win ;
Who in no way had ever presumed in his heart—
O, man above all touch of passion, or art !
Who had never presumed to cast with desire,
His eyes upon woman, might not now aspire
To win, or to ask for the white rose of God,
That mystical flower from a mystical sod.

And the chamber was opened and the priests first saw
The rods as they placed them, and trembled with awe ;
For the rod that was scorched at the altar was seen
To have sprouted with beautiful branches of green,
And out from its leafage three lilies so white,
Their whiteness half-dazzled and ravished the sight,
Had budded and blown and a fragrance soft stole,
Of Paradise sweet, to every sweet sense of the soul ;
And Mary and Joseph and all assembled there, saw
And felt a touch of the Heaven—a wave of the awe,
When the sign of the Lord is seen in the place,
And swept to the floor, dear crowd on their face ;
Then arose in their wonder and sweetness to see
What more in this vision of marvels might be ;
And a dove dropped out of the Heavenly light,
That hung as a cloud overarching them bright,
Dropped out of the light to the lily-flowered rod,
That Joseph received from the priest of his God ;
And all bowed to Joseph with the rod and the dove,
As beholding the bridegroom elect from above ;
Or all save one, too humanly, hopelessly crost,
Who gave but one cry—it was wild—he saw all was lost,

And shot from that sanctum as some stricken star,
 And rushed through the city to the deserts afar.
 Poor Agabus ! it was but a moment and all was as still
 As the hour after Lucifer dropped from the Heavenly Hill;
 All was as still with this audience now at their prayer,
 Down swept and saying for the seventh time there,
 “ *Let the Lord hasten to come !*” While Joseph surrounded
 in light,
 Was standing, the rod in his hand, the dove on the rod
 snow-white,
 Encalmed in the cloud that round him was growing more
 bright,
 And whiter and whiter the wings of the dove on the blinded
 sight.
 All the priests on their knees ; and Mary, the glow from
 her face
 Burned through her veil, and she bowed at the feet of
 Joseph in her grace,—
 With the grace of a saint at the feet of her bridegroom
 from God—
 The man who held in his hand the lily-flowered rod.

“ THROUGH THY EXALTED HONOR AND ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS,
 ST. JOSEPH, PRAY FOR US.”



PRECIOUS PREPARATION.

(The almshouses decorating apartments appropriated for the marriage feast.)

ALL the many halls
 Dazed the eyes to gaze upon,
 Gorgeous with their own grave splendors,
 Opened to the moon and sun.

Eastern tulips, white convolulus,
Rose and lily-knots,
Turning sacerdotal, old pavilions
Into paradisial spots.

The first pavilion had garlands of flowers
That were purple and scarlet, mingled with white ;
For the Bridegroom shall come wearing purple ;
And with the white, did the virgins honor
The chastity of Joseph, and the red,
Or scarlet, represented the line of David—
It was named the pavilion of the Bridegroom.
And the flowers hung in vinings from the ceilings,
And the tapestries ; and upon the right
Was the Pavillion of Beauty for the Bride—
The corridor opening into it adorned
With such flowers as were blue, which the virgins
Did in honor of the dress of Mary—
They had been accustomed to see her wear—
And bordered with violets for modesty.
And they put an arch of scarlet blossoms
Over the entrance, as she was royal.
But all the flowers within only were white—
Lilies in varieties and white pansies,
Pinks of a precious perfume that were white,
The white moss-rose and other white roses,
And the white tulip that has a fragrance,
And snow-buds ; camelias, japonicas,
And much other white bloomage with sprays
That were aromatic, and leafage curious
For delicateness and richness of verdure ;
And in the midst was a seat for the Bride,

Adorned only with roses and lilies—
The most fragrant and spotless for whiteness ;
And the green banner of Judas Macabeus
Was gathered up in a canopy with emeralds,
“ And the emeralds were very large and had
A beautiful brilliancy.” And the virgins
Went out, and an angel came in and surveyed
The room, and over the seat where Mary
Would sit, being espoused, he traced
A motto with a reed that was in his hand :
“ DAUGHTER OF DAVID, IMMACULATE,”
Lettered by lilies half-blown and th’ bells thereof,
In form of a rainbow over the bride-throne.

A pavilion was, moreover, adorned
Upon either hand of the pavilions
Of th’ Bride and Bridegroom for their attendants,
With scarlet flowerings for the lineage
Of David; and a throne was, also, entwined
With white flowers opposite for the High Priest.
And other pavilions were decorated
For the friends of the parties and the guests
Of distinction invited from the city,—
Gorgeous and odorous with flowers mingled
Both for color and fragrancies, according
To its design, or who should sit therein ;
The pavilions were in semi-circle,
And had communications by tapestries,
And the tapestries were gathered back,—
So that all their gorgeousness might be seen;—
And the tables were spread beneath a canopy,
And the feast was to open in the evening,
And would last seven days.

Turn and look back !

Floors of juniper ; pillars of porphyry ;
 Pavilions cushioned with needle-work ;
 Wainscotting inlaid with ivory and gold ;
 Marbles and jewels and flowers and the breath
 Of sanctity through th' rooms, and th' aroma
 Of th' future over all ! Mine eyes hath seen
 The glory of the house, where the Daughter
 Of Sion dwelleth ! Mine eyes have beheld
 The banquet-room in the house of the Lord !
 “ World-worshipped, gorgeous, old Jewish temple ! ”
 “ Shrine of Israel's God and the august, old law,”
 Made beautiful for the coming of the Bride
 Of the new Law ; and to be illuminated
 For the marriage of Messiah's mother
 At the vesper, could it be too beautiful ?
 Too sumptuous ? too resplendent ? Not so : See
 It stand waiting ! There now, let us leave
 This temple of beauty an hour,—the chambers
 Of magnificance for the

CHAMBERS OF THE BRIDEGROOM.

Down in the city—a low, flat-roofed house,—
 A narrow staircase, an awn, the matting
 Of palm and a carpenter's bench, a chest
 Of tools, a stool ; room for one man to work,
 Separated off by some matting of palm ;
 A chamber with a bed and a window,
 Looking into the south, toward the temple,
 And by the window a pillar of stone,
 The fashion of th' *priedieu* of th' patriarchs ;

Over th' pillar upon the wall, a shelf,
With a roll of parchment, thereon, lettered
Upon the back "the visions that Isaias,
The son of Amos saw." Poor little quarters,
Joseph had rented while doing some work
At his trade in the city, where his craft,
He could pursue, most time uninterrupted.
Joseph knelt by the pillar at the casement ;
Dear Joseph, the rod that budded and bloomed
In his two large hands still raised in prayer ;
As an angel he kneels all the morn in his calm,
And the noon rolls by in her car,

And the holy night
Brings shadow and light,
Strikes the torch of her vesper star,
Sprinkling the orient with sheen and balm,
And Joseph kneels there,
Still enrapt in his prayer ;
But could you have read his thoughts erewhile
His lips are warmed in that glorified smile ;
' What was he that he should take
Such a flower ? He a poor,
Labor-stained and toiling man ;'
Virtue is its own sweet wooer.
Saint thy rich humilities have rose,
Man of modest heart, God hath chose.

Then the attendants of the Bridegroom came,
Anointed his head, put the wedding garments on,
Made him ready, Joseph wondering th' meantime.

THE APARTMENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

And what shall Mary's robe be ?

It shall be as her hair—

Her hair is as the amber—

The robe that she shall wear

A web ingrained in gold,

Stiff for the very sheen,

Where in the precious broideries,

The raised flowers are seen.

Her crown of mingled flowers,

Her veil a silver lace—

The glory of her sweet eyes hid beneath,

And as a star her face.

Sweet Mical tires the shining robe,

The Virgin's bridemaid, envied grace,

Her own sweet brows reflect the light

So soft in Mary's face.

Sweet Mical* tires the shining robe,

And Anna, matron, binds the veil,

And lays on that young brow the crown

Of lilies from the vale.



THE ESPOUSALS OF JOSEPH AND MARY.

AND the hour appointed for the espousals
Having come, and the guests being assembled,
Let us contemplate Saint Joseph going
In his sweet, resigned astonishments forth,
To meet the Blessed Virgin, '*Of the Lord!*'

**Rosa Immaculata*, page 180.

- That it was of the Lord Saint Joseph saw,
Or could never have thought t' have consented
' It was above wonder, but should th' creature
Speak when the Creator hath spoken?' His soul
Had been likewise at the manifestation,
Lifted to this peace; as th' ancient Moses,
Calm—as an angel that walks before God.
Th' mild Saint Joseph cometh, a canopy
Called the hupah, unrolled over his head;
His attendants move with him on singing.
' Is he walking in vision?' ' Dreams should come
And visions should spread before, that He come;'
' If a vision, he may go prudently on;
If true, strange! that the Lord should be so good;
The more should he walk in simplicity
Before Him, lifting up his heart meekly
And holily.' Our great father! the Lord
Bless thee and anoint thee for thy spousals!
The Lord bless thee and anoint thee every step
Of thy distinguished way! Selected of God
And anointed, go forth happy Joseph,
The purest bride since Eve stood on the sward
With Adam before God for this sacrament,
Cometh to meet thee, the one radiant rose
Of virginhood! the dear daughter of David!
" The abode of chaste modesty immaculate!"
Never was bridegroom so honored before;
Go forth to meet this sure sign of blessing.

" All marriages are solemn." This one alone
Is all sweetness—the one dear " mystery
In so great a mystery," without shadow;

Th' one marriage that shall be perpetuated,
So to speak, in Heaven—heavenliest spousals!
Go forth, O, glorified Joseph! rejoicing.

He goes, how sweetly, brightly, benignly calm,
A halo round his brow, softly discernable;
The hupah is borne forward and they move on—
They that attend him continuing to sing;
And when they appeared within the gates,
And within the grounds of the temple,
A trumpet sounded, and a great shout arose
From the temple: “Behold the bridegroom cometh!”
And the Bride appeared coming forth to meet
Him, with all the almahs, their lamps burning;
And these were surrounded by virgins with harps
And timbrels; and the virgins with the lamps
Commenced to sing as the bridegroom approached;
And th’ virgins that encircled them touched their harps
And their timbrels—they that accompanied
The Bridegroom responding in the distance.

BRIDE ATTENDANTS.

Who is he that comes, the glory of his banner on the breeze,
Stately and imposing as the cedar among the trees?

BRIDEGROOM ATTENDANTS.

Comes the Bridegroom regal brow,
Bound with nuptial garland now;
Son of David and the king,
With the bracelet and the ring.

BRIDE ATTENDANTS.

To the minstrelsy of song,
Let the fair procession move along.

BRIDEGROOM ATTENDANTS.

Who is she that comes as a queen to meet us ?
 Who is she that comes as a rose-branch to greet us ?
 Lithe of form and graceful as the bounding roe,
 Who is she ? maids of beauty, tell us that we know.

BRIDE ATTENDANTS.

'Tis the lily of the virgins coming forth to meet her spouse ;
 'Tis the Pearl of woman's praise, 'tis the Rose of Anna's
 house :

Eyes as doves upon the waters,
 Rose and Queen among the daughters ;
 Odor of her fair renown,
 As the perfume of her gown ;
 While the cymbal gaily rings,
 Comes the daughter, fair of kings.

[Then the procession paused—a third choir heard
 Discoursing sweet from the temple with cymbals:]

“The wife should be to her husband as the bunch of myrrh she wears in her bosom. She should pass through life resting on him, heedless of all other men as though she were in a desert, because jealousy is as inflexible as death, and its lamps are lamps of fire and flame, and conjugal love is a thing so precious, that the richest of men were he to buy it at the expense of all that he possessed, might still reckon he had it for nothing.”*

Then the attendants of the Bride presented
 The Bride unto the Bridegroom, and Joseph
 Saluted Mary placidly and gravely,
 And covering her head with his mantle,
 Placed her on the right hand, as is said
 In divine canticle, “and the Queen stood
 Upon thy right hand clothed in variety.”

*Orsini's marriage of the Blessed Virgin.

And th' attendants that surrounded th' Bridegroom,
And the virgins around the Bride again sang :
Waketheharp, breathe the flute, playing sweet, playing grave,
Let the torches of the bridal-bearers burn and wave !

(The choir from the temple responding)

Bear the myrtle and the palm-branch in ;
Let the nuptials of the chosen spouse begin.
And Saint Joseph and the sweet Virgin Mary,
Surrounded by their attendants, ascended
Th' steps of the temple and entered within th' doors,
And having come into the pavilions
Of the ceremonial, and before the throne
Of the High Priest, Priest Zachary taking
The hand of Mary, placed it in that of Joseph,
And Joseph put a ring on her finger
And said, "*Thou art my spouse,*"—and the ring,
The dove that had alighted on the rod,
Had brought it in its beak,—and Joseph held
Within his hand the rod that had blossomed,
And Ben Levi, the scribe, wrote down the marriage,
And Zachary the nearest kinsman, poured the wine
Into the cup that the Bride and Bridegroom
Carried to their lips ; their attendants sang
A nuptial benediction, and the High Priest blessed
The veil and prayed for the birth of th' Messiah

And thus was Mary, star and rose of Israel, wed ;
And faith and hope fresh graces through the city spread ;
Jerusalem, exult and sing, now hastes the long expected hour
Of thy Messiah in, thy rod of Jesse's peerless and awaited
flower.

" HOLY MARY, SPOUSE OF JOSEPH, PRAY FOR US !"

" HOLY JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE VIRGIN MARY, PRAY FOR US."

NUPTIAL LILIES.

CONFIDENCE IN SOULS THAT LOVE GOD.

“ O, Lily of virginity !
Like unto Mary fair.”

(*Third night of the feast.*)

“ **T**ERRACES in the moonlight draw the guests”—
Gardens full of sweets and nightingales,—
Or they have drawn in tacit kindness off.
To so “ leave the new spouses to become
Acquaint ” a little—or sweeter, wotting not,
There has been the loveliest supernatural,
And is, these Heaven-arranged ceremonials,
Running through, and over all a brightness—
One panorama of acts paradisial :
And many angels descend and mingle
With the guests at this festival. Why should
They not ? They have a special interest
In this wedding. What mystics have not seen
What principalities of Paradise, here ?
What seraphim ; powers ? What representatives
From Heaven ? What cherubs in clouds come
To witness and honor these espousals ?
No doubt Gabriel was at this marriage,
Angel of Mary, and Raphael, angel
Of Saint Joseph ; and was not the angel
Of the Messiah present at the nuptials
Of Messiah’s mother ? Does not Heaven send
Three-fourths of its angel hierarchy ?
First Potentates of the Almighty—
Archangels : Michael, Gabriel, Raphael ?

Standard-Bearers of the Eternal Father,
Sent to the marriage of His Son's mother !

The glows that diffuse and shed from th' garments
Of Mary, and from th' garments of Joseph,
Absorb the glow from the spice-lamps, held out
In th' hands of two carved cherubims, at th' head
Of the seat, where Joseph and Mary sit ;
Whose wings meet over the head of the spouses.
The very air is heavenly in the chamber,
Where Joseph and Mary have been married,
Where these spouses new married are seated,
Side by side, in the pavilion of the Bride. Left
By themselves, Joseph converses with Mary,
And he admires the wisdom of her words,
While she made sure by an interior peace,
And a light shed yet more into her soul,
Is moved to communicate to Joseph
Her desires ; which she in this manner doth :

' O wisest spouse,—by God's kind grace,—the noblest and
the best !

When pious Joachim came—in precious peace, his dear soul
rest !—

And gave his child, sweet sire, in charity most undefiled,
She upward looked, the heavens above her deeper smiled,
And sweetness dropped as twilight dews that same pure hour,
The same that girds her soul to-day with peaceful power ;
My gracious spouse, “ *Thine Lord,*” she said, “ *Thine only,*
Lord, alway !”

Nor more did loveliest Mary in her modest wisdom say :

But Joseph understood, and round his lips
Burned smile so happy, that the angels paused,

Who fanned meantime, sweet Mary's blessed brow,
 In admiration nearer unto Joseph leaned ;
 Her voice sweetly unguent penetrated his heart,
 A great joy flowed into his soul. He grew,
 In that one moment, to a new stature of grace,
 And taking the hands of Mary paternally,
 Between his two palms, and gazing holily
 On her face, he said, ' my spouse, my young spouse,
 ' " *Thou shalt be unto me as my mother and my sister !* " '
 ' Be as my mother, precious spouse, to me,
 So will I guard thy cherished chastity ;
 Be as my sister, sacred near, my fair young mystic bride,
 Walk in thy spotless virgin robes, forever by my side. '

The wing-veiled brows of angels reverent lower,
 A circle round swept to the very floor ;
 A smile drops from the skies to Mary's face,
 To Joseph's heart run streams of copious grace.

He who weds the Rose of Jesse,
 Pure should be in flesh and spirit,
 He should be more saint than human,
 More an angel than a man.—*Rosa Mystica.*

" GUARDIAN OF THE VIRGINITY OF MARY PRAY FOR US."



LEAVING THE HOUSE OF HER GOD.

IN the seventh and last eve of the feast,
 Mary made a farewell visit to the grave
 Of Anna, and the well of the Voice.
 What an imparadised week it had been ;
 And Mary sat with Mical in silence
 Under the tree, where she had come to draw

The water. Mical is thinking of th' departure
Of Mary and she cannot speak ; Mary
Of that Voice and the goodness of St. Joseph,
And of his urbanity and holiness ;
And as they arose up, not yet speaking,
And came up from the gardens, Joseph met
Them—came out to meet them—and conducted
Them back to the temple. That night, Mary
Slept for the last time in her little cell.
It affects us to see her bidding adieus.
How pleasant is everything her presence
Has endeared. * Soon after it was midnight,
She arose from her couch by the wall,
And smoothed the rug of crimson carefully :
She would sleep no more in this fair chamber,
Where the hours had been holy as hidden,
And no one hour regretted, blessed past !

Was she not sad, from such beauty and calm
And sanctity, departing ? Beautifully so :
Her heart grew to the spot—to the whole spot,
Altars and galleries, gardens and her cell,—
But is consoled by that pledge of Joseph.
She is overlooking Jerusalem now—
Once more in the moonlight from her window,—
That Hill of Olives and that grave garden ;
How still all things stand in the sweet starlight.
She prays for the last time on the three stairs,
Overlooking the door of the sanctuary.

The morning, it has come in the temple,
When she sings not with the virgins in choir ;
Eleven years she had sang with the virgins ;

She is a married woman now ; she sits not
With the almahs. This is the last morning ;
Mary wept as the almahs, her sisters, sang,
Her tears only making her the more lovely ;
And the presentation of the virgin,
Who succeeded Mary, being ended,
And Mary having led her, accompanied
By the virgins, to the door of her cell
And embraced her, and this lovely virgin,
Named Veronica, having gone in to pray,
Where Mary has so many sweet years prayed,
Behold ! Mary returning from the last look
Of her cell through the corridors, gravely,
Met Zachary, and her kinsmen taking
Her by th' hand wished her joy, and commended
Joseph, and Mary knelt for his blessing,
And he blessed her, and she being arisen
He lead her unto the door of the Holies,
But went not in.

‘ Why should he fear to lead
Her where an angel had led her ? ’ He feared
Because he was not an angel ; and Mary,
Herself, thought no more to go in, but knelt
Before the veil or curtain of the chamber
Of the tabernacle. She bowed to the floor
And kissed the holy veil, but disturbed not
The sacred concealment. Zachary was moved.
What would the temple be without Mary ;
Or, if his piety would not so allow,
Yet, how they would miss this one white dove
And her prayers, exciting all to fervor.
O, Zachary, what a prize thou art losing !

O, Joseph, what a prize thou hast obtained !
And Zachary was sad, but a sweet light played
Over his countenance, which Joseph saw—
The light in the face of the priest as he joined
Them and went with Mary in to the place
Of the altar of consecration, where Anna
And Joachim had brought her when a child.
Mary knelt upon the spot, blessed forever !
Where she knelt, and vowed her virginity
That day. Joseph knelt by her now ; Mary
Said now, too, "*Evermore Lord.*" Beautiful,
Mystical, two-fold spouse ! There is the ring
Of Joseph upon thy married hand ;
The vow of obedience to Joseph
She repeats likewise ; God shares with Joseph,
Keeping but her one lily purity
Jealously Himself. God's bride, Joseph's bride,
Beautiful Immaculate Rose Virgin !
The Blessed Virgin bride, the double bride !
And Joseph made vows corresponding
Unto Mary's. It was a sight for th' angels !
Ye twain at th' altars that morning. Mary
Bows her head as an angel, or flower, to kiss
The steps of the altar : then kissing the ring
Of her marriage with Joseph, she arises
And goes out with Joseph, all of the priests
Blessing her ; and the High Priest as they made
Their adieus unto him, praised her to Joseph,
And he blessed them with his hands on her head,
And prayed again for the birth of the Messiah.
And all of her companions wept as she kissed
Them ; but most of all wept Mical, her friend.

Weep now, O Sion, thy daughter, thy ornament
From thee taken! Yet not as they that keep
Not hope, in that Mary now is married,
She shall to thee return bearing thy King.
And the friends of the Bridegroom and the Bride
Lead them forth from the city in procession—

Cymbals sounding, and the air
Redolent with odors everywhere;
Till the city gates are past
Silver to the poor is cast—
They returning blessings loud,
While the women in a crowd,
In their gladness, in their pride,
Now and then stop the smiling Bride,
Count her ornaments, rehearse her beauty.
Praise her virtues, tell her duty.
Mary thus from Sacred Sion goes;
Jerusalem surrenders thus her rose.



BRIDAL JOURNEY OF JOSEPH AND MARY.

BEHOLD th' escort having blessed them turn back;
But we leave not Mary so,
We may still with Joseph go.

And seeing them turn toward Jerusalem
Mary wept. O, Mary, wipe those pious tears!
Thou art going back to the old Hill home
And Anna, precious mother! Eleazer came
In time to witness the spousals. The old
And faithful servant was glad, beholding
The daughter of his master who was dead,

Given in marriage to so godly a man ;
He has gone before to apprise Anna.

It was Joseph's first journey with Mary,
And more and more unto her, his heart clave,
More and more he wondered at the favor
Of the Lord, that had bestowed such a treasure.
A mule had been provided for Joseph,
But the escort departed, he descended ;
He would not ride by th' side of his princess,
But walked for a league by th' side of Mary,
Guiding the mule whereon she rode, and Mary
Would have alighted to walk by his side
In meekness ; but Joseph would not suffer ;
And it was proper and most becoming,
Joseph should in all things honor Mary,
And condescend unto her as the bridegroom
Unto the bride, or the reverence of Joseph
Was the medium between the bridegroom-lord
And father, that is kingly toward th' daughter
Born to his honors ; and Mary thought not
To gainsay Joseph, in anything, or to doubt
His precious protection ; he was her spouse,
The Lord had given ; it was his privilege ;
And from this time or thence, she would have washed
His feet, or have unloosed his shoe-latches ;
But if he drew to her side, and preferred
Her—" In honor prefer one another,"
If he kissed the border of her garment,
In salutation, it distracted not Mary ;
He was her brother, her father, her spouse.
Mary never questioned Joseph, blessed trust !

Beautifully given, beautifully received :
He might prefer her more than other men
Their spouses ; it was in th' Lord. She began
To see, though indistinctly, the shadow
Of the Heavenly Spouse upon the earth ;
And Saint Joseph could not excel Mary
In love, Mary suffers no one to excel
Her. But we neither hear or discover
In this blissful path, blissfullest journey !
That strange dialogue about submission,
Or obedience of which some have discoursed,
As to which one should the other serve.
Which should be the head in this family ?
Would be too incongruous in this journey,
Would be incongruous in a marriage
Of such sweetness. Blessed be God ! marriage
Betwixt Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin
Was a bond, not a yoke ; as in piety,
That devotion is sweetest that's devout
Without knowing it, fervent unwotting ;
So in that conjugal devotion, wearing
The ring of the sacrament without feeling
It bind. Joseph took his place naturally
And supernaturally. Glorious saint-husband !
He never thought more than Mary to change
The order of nature and of Heaven.
He was too meek and too wise a man, to think
To new arrange God's good old arrangement ;
But he never thought to rule over Mary,
For he doubted not Mary, or her wisdom,
In any one thing, benign Saint Joseph !
How could he ? and Mary never thought not

To be ruled. How could she and be Mary?
 Both only thought to obey God, and do
 Good to each other and to the neighbor.
 In the morning he walked by Mary,
 And in the afternoon he rode beside,
 Mary soliciting, but rode not far,
 When they overtook a man that was lame,
 And had difficulty to walk, and Joseph
 His heart inflamed, descended from his beast
 And placed the man that was decrepit thereon
 And walked by Mary for the rest of the way,
 Guiding her beast and diledted by the sweetness
 And fitness of all her words; and then Joseph
 And Mary would be silent for a long way,—
 Joseph dwelling upon the words of Mary,
 Mary anticipating Nazareth.

Pass on

In sweet haste—by picturesque hamlets—towns;
 Handsome Sichem, gleaming through foliage;
 Through olive groves—laurel-woods,—palm-walks;
 By red-ribbed Garizam—lofty Hebal,—
 Thabor, mountain, prophetic, uplifting
 Its grave brows toward the serene golden sky
 Of Galilee—beyond Lebanon, veiling
 His snowy peaks in th' clouds,—amid scenery
 Majestic, varied—grandeur, loveliness—
 Glorious gorges deep in—narrow valleys
 Of very fair beauty. Mary has traveled
 This road one other day; she remembers
 The holy sites that Joachim pointed out;
 And she and Joseph take repose in the arbor
 Where they had reposed at the noontide then.

Move on, dearest Bridegroom and Bride; never was
 Such bridal journey before, so simple,
 Peaceful, heavenly. Troops of angels watch
 All the dear steps of both; all the dear words
 Of both delight the fresh wondering angels.
 What will come of so sweet a mystery?
 Celestial observers, to think ye have watched
 Every petal of these flowers of Paradise,
 All the choice unfoldings—saw Joseph born,
 And heard his young vow; announced Mary's birth;
 Saw Mary presented; saw Mary grow up
 In the temple; lost not sight of Joseph;
 Saw Joseph and Mary married, making
 With them their bridal tour, and do not know!

“ST. JOSEPH, COMPANION AND SOLACE OF MARY, PRAY FOR US.”



ON THE HILL.

WILL the harvest pass and no reaper?
 No man to gather the crop
 Of the wheat, the apple, the pear,
 The lentil, the bean, the hop?

The rind of the peach is goldened out,
 And the olive swells with fat,
 The fig is ripe on the harvest-hill,
 And the grape groans for the vat.

* 'Tis the twentieth now and the sun
 Has crossed the winter line;
 'Tis time the harvest-man had come
 To press the winter-wine.

Who shall garner the field of Joachim?
Who shall fill the widow's barn,
While the widow spins by her lattice still
The skein of the snowy yarn?

But, how Anna looked forth from her lattice
And saw Mary coming, it is written
In another book,* and we may not twice tell,
While as yet so much remaineth sweet untold;
But the while Mary and Anna visit,
We may walk with Joseph, overlooking
For the first time the pastures of Joachim.
He had become acquainted with Mary's father
At the feasts in Jerusalem, but never
Had seen before the abode of his friend—
And now he was buried. These were the vines
That he had pruned, the trees he had planted;
And these were the pastures, and this the flock
That had heard his call; and now he was not:
And to them as though he had never been;
And what to him all this he had possessed?
All things spoke to Joseph of Joachim;
But as of a saint to a saint, and Joseph
Ascended the hill to an old prayer-place:
Behold Joseph surveying the vale from here;
Looking down upon that dear cot below:
Anna and Joachim had come there to live
When they were married; Mary had been born
There; Joachim died there; and all of the days
Of Anna's true widowhood have been there.
There are lines in Anna's face more than of age,—

* Vide *Rosa Immaculata*, 219.

Th' lines lie all in light to-day, kind Anna !
Her welcome had gone to the heart of Joseph.
She might have felt disappointment to see
Mary so young and so fair, brought to her back
With so poor and with so aged a spouse ;
She had not, dear, pious Anna. Behold
Joseph praying now where Joachim had :
By his old pillar, for his friend who was dead.

“ ST. JOSEPH, JUST AND PERFECT MAN, PRAY FOR US ! ”



IN THE HOUSE OF JACOB.

A MESSENGER, sent unto the parents
Of Joseph, having shown his rod blossomed
And that the fair Virgin of the temple,
Even the daughter of Anna and Joachim,
Had been given unto him in marriage,
Susannah, her hands clasped on her bosom,
Remained for a long time silent ; her joy
Overpowered too much for words ; Joseph was
Th' core of her heart ; but Jacob arose up
And blessed all his house and exclaimed joyfully,
‘ Now will I live and not die ! ’





Virgin Roses.

[The First Period of the Blessed Virgin's Married Life and that of Saint Joseph dwelling with Mary in her Home at Nazareth—two Virgin Roses.]



SEPTEMBER is ripe in our clime,
September is fair in our time :
What must it have been in Mary's clime ?
What must it have been in Mary's time ?

Benign and fruitful month of all the year,
Queen-crowned and goldened everywhere,
Since in thee, not only harvest fields appear,
But birth and marriage morn* most fair
And Joseph coming unto Nazareth first
To husbandman the fields as Joachim erst.

There is a sweet, lingering summer on the dear olden summit,
a pleasant bustle, or stir that is very busy in the quiet yard of
Anna's house and around the little brown barn in the rear of the
house.

There is old Assinus,
Harnessed to a wain,
Or a little Syrian cart
For gathering in the grain.

* An almah of the temple was espoused when she attained her
fourteenth year.—*Jewish Tradition.*

Happy, old Assinus !
Gay his donkey looks,
Fresh from lily-croppings
Beside the water brooks !

Bland, old Assinus !
He looks as sleek and white
As fed on lilies
Always,—so wise, so bright !

And staidly grave,
Dear, grand, old mule,
As any stoical
Philosopher at school.

But, loiterer, loving so much every stone even of Mary's home,
every spire on the green sward here, every flower, every cricket
chirping in the grass now the autumn hath come, every bird
flying over Anna's house in the blue air—this will scarcely avail
this supernaturally active day. Let us hasten into the holy fields !

What glorious husbandman
That walks the barley-land,
That bends above the bearded grain
With sickle in the hand ?

Saint Joseph, blessed Saint ! Saint Joseph reaps
In Mary's field to-day,
And old Eleazer binds the sheaves
And treads the reaper-way.

What maid as morning on the hills
Come smiling out to glean ?
What maid as bright as mountain rose
Upon the reaper's fresh track seen ?

Robe of blue, gathered to the ankle back—
A half-sheaf in her hand—
As Ceres standing on the first steps of her throne
Within the Roman land.

What maid in the track of the reaper?
The Blessed Virgin come out to glean;
Sweet Mary of Nazareth as Ruth
In the field of Boaz seen.

The sound of the sickle is still in the field,
Saint Joseph is gathering the corn;
Eleazer, old servant, sturdily bringing in sheaves,
And Mary has gleaned since morn.

The little barn groans and laughs,
With its corn-stuffed ribs; the plain,
The breast of the hill fresh shorn,
Looks up unburdened again.

The little barn laughs and groans
With its corn-stuffed ribs,
Its bays of barley, scaffold of beans
And the little lentil-cribs.

Our little barn is full and more,
And yet the lone wayfarer as before,
When Joachim lived—his name with praise—
Has come all harvest time as in his days,
And still from out its ripe, unwaning store,
Did never freer fruitage daily pour
In dearest, golden, giving days of yore,
When father Joachim fed the hungry poor.

The cellar of Anna is full ;
The flow of grape in the vat
Runneth over ; with the olive and fig,
The store of the widow is fat.

And the winter hath stayed for this ;
The winter did pause and wait,
Or the rains they came at Nazareth,
But this year, one month late.

A month of Mary's honeymoon,
A month and more has past ;
O ! the honeymoon that may never wane
Till the moons of earth are past.

O ! the virginal honeymoon
That shall stand in its full and glow
In the beautiful skies of Paradise
When all hath perished below.

Mary was married and had come
To the old Hill and Nazareth home
All that Autumn after, or the wane
Of Summer, milder was the reign
Of the waning year upon that dearer Hill
For the dear returned presence, dearer still.

Beautiful Nazareth ! Where Mary and Joseph newly wedded had come home to dwell : to live virgin spouses on the old Hill together, and to comfort Anna all the days that she might live.

Sweet Mary bakes the cakes for Anna,
And takes the burden of the household,
To bear in her pure lily hands, —
Her mother now is getting old ;

She loves to yield her cares to Mary ;
Dear, fair young house-wife she begins ;
And now while Mary kneads the bread,
The mother sits and spins,

And journeys every day with one
New lily to the tomb,
And come unto the old wheel back,
It has another bloom—

That lily in the pot—Then Anna knits
For Joseph—and spins—she knows
Not wherefore—one other web so fine,
Of whiteness as the snows :

Dreaming of Heaven as she spins—
That Heaven she soon may win,
Of that dear Limbus-door ajar,
She soon may enter in :

And Anna spins a robe for Jesus,
Although she knows it not ;
The swathings for the Bethlehem Babe :
It is her blessed lot !

Anna spinning in the moonlight,
Mary bringing in the tray
With fresh butter, cakes and figs,
For the supper of the day ;

Vesper-meal underneath the palms,—
Just within the door—
Mary serving Anna, serving Joseph,
Angels could not covet more !

Jòseph sitting after supper
In the shadow of the vine,—
Eleazer grooming old Assinus—
Twilight almost divine.

O, Mary, thou art now alluring God !
O, Joseph, thou art drawing favors down
Upon the favored Nazareth sod !
And Anna—ripening for thy crown.

O, for the picture of those grand old patriarchal hills !
My hungry vision on their distant beauty but insatiate fills :
Like panoramic shifts, or landscapes of some lovely dream,
Alack ! as yet but glimpses round me flit and gleam.

Give me to see the stateliness of palms,
To scent the fragrance of the balms
Round Anna's cot that blow, dear house !
Give me to see, sweet, mystic spouse,
The cot where Mary-maid was born,
Where Mary came when wed ;
Blest little house beneath the palms,
Four clay walls painted red ;
The simple porch, the awn,
The eaves, the rustic door,
The threshold-stone half-worn away,
The patch of green before.

In the sweet hush,
The four red walls, pale red, or creamy pink—
The palest rose around does deeper of the red-tide drink—
Pure house, but white a-blush.

Its precious mystery,
Perhaps the snowy loam, some angel whispered o'er
While in its womb of forming rock, and so its core
Blushed with its destiny.

The sacred, sealed roof-tree
Where Anna lives, her casement hid and still—
The saintly widow of the mystic Hill—
Anoint mine eyes to see!

Show Mary's mother full to me,
Pale Anna spinning by her lattice, pensive, still,
Serenely admirable widow of the Hill!
Benign saint-father, yet from thee,

That our fair picture fairer grow,
And that calm Virgin, as the May-month in the year,
By Anna's side let Mary's modest face appear;
And yet the sweetness show,

Unveil thy gracious face to me!
Around that doorway, on the Nazareth sod,
Show unto me the man that representeth God;
Th' Eternal Sire's shadow let me see!

Father among saints, listen to hear!
The mists of ages 'twixt us sweep—Father, I weep,
But O! the glimpse I've seen I can but keep!
Saint-sire, beneath the palms appear,

And let the grand completed vision stand,
As some pure stereoscopic view within my soul, and glow
Till I, some other day, may look through time dissolved, to
know

The Hill that crowns the Nazareth-land.

FIVE MOONS OF GOLD, OR LADY-DAY.

“ For on this blessed day
She knelt at prayer,
When lo! before her shone
An angel, fair.”—*Ave Maria*.

And the winter came,
And the winter went;
Never earthly winter
Was before so spent.

WHAT a beautiful period of life,
What a period of Saint Joseph's days,
All the moons to that culminating March
Where Gabriel sings the Virgin's praise!

That month of the Incarnate visit,
That all-glorious twenty-fifth day,
That great annunciate hour when God
Came down with man to stay.

Howled the winds abroad erewhile,
Dashed the rain-drops in the mountains,
Brimming all the summer fountains;
Within, 'twas only smile.

A little spot, perhaps a triple rod,
Enringed with calm and kept for God:
Nor frost nor rime may scatter round,
Without upon the mountain found.
The flowers blow fresh round Anna's house,
Where dwell the mystic Bride and Spouse,
And all within the spot that Mary charms
Is free from winter's rude alarms.

And Joseph threshed the golden grain
And beat the barley for the mill,
And winter went on Nazareth Hill
And summer came again—

The time that we call spring—
And Joseph spaded Mary's flowers
And fresh the earth to till,
And wrought, what other hours,

A little house upon the mountain side
To hew, to frame. One day, well,
It was March, or twenty-fifth of Nadir month—
The day no poet ere could tell

Its blessedness!—Saint Joseph went
In Mary's fields to sow,
And as he scattered wide the seed,
He marked the ether glow,—

All day he pondered piously the depth
Or brilliance of the blue;
All day his eyes were drifting to the skies
That wore so rich a hue;

All day those calm, prophetic skies through which
The growing grandeurs waited for the light—
The glory-deepening blues that waited for
The glows of the Incarnate night.

He scattered wide the golden seed upon the Hill,
He turned with care the humid sod,
Until the sun went in its sun-rest brighter down, he
turned
Toward the cot to await God.

Behold him rising o'er the little Hill,
That glorious man of faith,
That man whose name is written just with God,
And Mary's husband, as the Gospel saith.

Up through the lane, he rises now the brow—
The Hill is in the setting sun—
What cot as Heaven to turn to when
His day's dear work is done!

The Hill is in the setting sun—
A gentle slope—a lawn of green—
A little table-land round which
The guardian hills are seen—

A little cot that seeks the northern hill,
Or northern hill hugs the dear cot,
And palm and aloe, fig and fir,
Outskirt the paradisial spot.

Through ancient palms whose grand arms
Mystic cross—the palms are two—
Through jassamine and low sweet thyme,
Peep four pink walls* to view.

Those same fair, mystic walls
We ne'er enough can praise,
So God preserves them to us still,
Down through all days—

* "A stone peculiar to Nazareth and not found anywhere else in the whole world."

Or but the thatch and angle of
The rear wall Joseph sees
As he comes up sweet Mary's garden,
Through the pomegranate trees.

The lime is growing well, the apple in its bloom,
The tender fig is putting out ;
But he, dear thoughtful saint, is thinking more
Of sacred mysteries about.

What means such light? The day is done,
The unwonted, burning sun is down :
He never saw the eve before
Wear such an amber crown.

He reaches now the silver flow
That runs from Mary's bower,
A light is on the stream he never saw ;
He feels the grandeur of the hour.

Drawn near the cot where Mary kneels he stands,
His vision held—yet not afar—
Near Joseph seeing not yet clothed
All over in the brightness as some star.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in said unto her: Hail full of grace; the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, who having heard was troubled at his sayings and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her fear not Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus, He shalt be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne

of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel how shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and therefore the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her which is called barren, because no word is impossible with God. And Mary said behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."—Luke I. 24—39.

And Joseph stood surrounded by the light
As in a cloud ; and when he had retired
To his chamber, he knelt by the window
And continued in prayer until the morning ;
And the window of the chamber of Joseph
Overlooked the casement of the Blessed Virgin.

O, never before was the midnight so bright !
What is it that touches transparent the night ?
What is it illumines so magnificent the air,
While Joseph pours forth adoring his prayer ?
Is it an ardent touch of the sweet moon-glows
Caressing the satin cheek of the Sharon rose ?
And the glows are as suns wanting the fire ;
Yet with that trail of the night poets admire—
That shadow that cradles the blush of the flower—
Save the rose on the spray of the Virgin's bower—
Or there is but one bush where the color is out
On the rose, a spray, the casement of Mary about,
Touched with the coming that brightens the air,
Or the glow on the Hill that floods from her hair—
For the word is said, " THE HANDMAID BEHOLD !"
And the Virgin is wrapped in a cloud as gold.

O, never before was the midnight so bright!
 And Joseph looks out on the luminous night,
 And yet, as yet, his holy contemplative eye
 Permitted not to read the Annunciation sky,
 Or yet within that bright mysterious cell to look
 At that great hour when God flesh of the Virgin took.
 But the light of the night was in the face
 Of the most serene Joseph in the morning,
 And as an "illuminated temple, light
 Pouring from every pane" was th' Blessed Virgin
 In those days.



INCARNATION MORNINGS.

*"Te nascente ut aurora.
 Ut te cælo sine mora
 Miti sol justitiæ."*—Neot. Poeta.

"Blow over all the garden, blow; blow
 O'er all the gardens of the West,
 Balm-breathing Orient, whisper low
 The secret of thy spicy nest."—*Ave Maria*.

"Thou art, O Mary! the sanctuary of holy aromatics,
 Sanctuary embalmed with celestial perfume,
 Thou art brilliant with the most delicious flowers
 Of all virtues."—*St. Bernard*.

"VIRGIN CONSORT OF A VIRGIN MOTHER, PRAY FOR US."

THE eighth morning after, while yet early,
 Joseph was upon the mountain and hewed
 Timber. He liked much to work for Mary.
 Blessed are they who build houses for God,
 Or for Mary! When he came to Nazareth,
 That afternoon, he walked over the farm.
 He selected a site where he would build

His young wife a house, just within the edge
Of the orchard of olives, not many paces
From Anna's door, and the cedar and fir
Were transported by Eleazer and Assinus
As fast as hewn. But the work was not yet done,
For he gave much time to prayer and had calls;
The hamlet had no other carpenter;
He wrought to be no burden to Anna,
That he might not diminish her charities;
He wrought to provide, also, for Mary,
Who had with his approbation given
Her inheritance, when she was married,
To the widows and orphans of Jerusalem;
For Joseph had received the richest bride
That ever came to any man penniless;
And he wrought, moreover, that he might give
Of the surplus of his own hands to the poor;
And the work progressed fast as there was need.
He had come up this morning to select
Choice woods for some panelings, when there came
To him, in the mountains, a messenger
From his father, saying an inheritance
Had fallen and he must go to Bethlehem
And secure the property for the family;
And the man having departed, Joseph
Went down to his house and made th' message
Known, and Mary desired to accompany
Him so far as Hebron, where her cousin,
Elizabeth, dwelt; and Anna provided
A basket of provision for the way.

It was a dear gladness to Joseph to take

Mary to visit her friends for the first time.
 I think Joseph was proud of th' Blessed Virgin;
 Of so fair a spouse how could he but be?
 Though all of his exultance was pious.
 They leave the door, Mary seated upon th' white ass,
 The eyes of Anna following them out of sight.

FROM NAZARETH TO HEBRON.

Jesus is taking, through a little part
 Of his earth, his first human journey—out
 Before born, on a mission—"precipitate"—
 Ever blessedly ready Jesus Christ!
 O, Mary, journeying for the first time
 With Jesus! Didst thou ever, who readest,
 Receiving thy Divine Lord, arising up,
 Go out by thyself and take thy journey,
 Fleeing in the swift rail-carriage away
 With Jesus alone? How intimate was
 Jesus to thee, then; insomuch, thou wouldst
 Never after journey without Jesus.
 I knew a person who for the first time
 Received Jesus, and that morning after
 Made such a journey—What a peaceful journey!

Joseph has journeyed with Mary before,
 But never with Jesus before. O, man
 To journey first with Jesus upon the earth!
 Wonderful journey! every step. Few words
 Spoke Mary; but those few burned long after
 In the heart of Joseph. He drew nearer
 At times and seemed almost to divine—
 And gazed on her face with an awe, guiding

The beast upon which she rode, reserved
And beautiful young spouse! It was a joy
For Joseph; and Mary often alighted
To walk alongside her spouse, or to go
Up a little way by herself the hills.
“All her garments smell of cassia!”
“But the glory of the King’s daughter is within.”

On some elevated knoll, commanding
The surrounding country, on some shelf-land
By the mountain-spring, Mary would await
Joseph, laboring serenely up. Dear, placid
And beaming face! and the nearer Joseph
Drew, the more his face beamed. Why should not
His face glow and his contemplative eyes?
O, tantalizing, outstretching mystery!
Enamored of God, and yet he don’t know;
Our soul is enamored, looking after,
Up through that mountain path watching Mary,
Riding now, or walking, moving on ahead,
In every attitude, in every change,
Transmuted; she who was all beautiful,
Beautified: The beauty of the king’s daughter,
Illumined: Jesus transmuting his pure mother;
The Divine conception transfiguring
The humilities. There she stands a lily,
The sun on every leaf, a lily, every petal,
A snow-crystal, and the sun under th’ crystal:
Mary knowing, but O, so hiddenly!
Hiding it so choicely, O, so fragrantly!
In the dear immaculate nest of grace
And virtues, her immaculate heart:

Only person yet, knowing it in the world !
 O, fair tabernacle of Him ! O, white—
 Tenderly illuminated White Tent
 Of Jesus ! All thy tent cloth is white,
 O, Daughter of Sion ! O, immaculacy !
 Immaculacy ! O, Ivory Tabernacle
 Of the Creator ! He, who created
 Thee, dwells within thee ! Has God changed places
 With thee, Mary ? Is He who is Almighty
 Dependent upon a creature ? Thou art
 Very wonderful, Mary ! Mary only lifts
 Her meek, glorified brow, and thinks God
 Is wonderful. Thou art very mystical,
 O, Mary ! and in thy exuberance
 Of charity, all things, with thee, rejoice.

Robe of blue among the mountains,
 Mary up to Hebron goes,
 House of Zachary soon shall see
 Beauty of the Nazareth Rose.

ELIZABETH.

“ Dawn flashes o’er the hills, the purple robe
 Of night, with royal ermine fringed, trails past,
 Sweeping the cedars neath her silent tread,
 And with her low-breathed whispers from their dreams
 Stirs up to life and song the sleeping birds
 And incense-breathing flowers.

The Syrian sky

Full of a dreamy languor and a tint
 Of faintest rose, hangs like a crystal cup
 That empties golden wine, inverted
 O’er the hills, while with a tremulous sigh,
 Like one awakening with a sense of joy
 Too full for utterance, the low-voiced winds
 With spicy breathings dally with the palms
 And make rich music through the olive grove,
 Filling the air with fragrance and the grass

With aromatic snows, as midst the boughs
Of orange trees it wrestled with the leaves ;
And tossed the fountain's spray like gems
Upon th' breast of morn.

Upon a broad plateau
Crowned with rich pomegranate blooms and
Far up the hillside stood the high priest's house,
Stately with marble pillars circled round ;
With pediment and cornice richly carved,
And sculptured architrave of costly stone ;
Of presence fair, befitting well a priest
Of Israel's princely line.

On the flat roof
Crowned with dark shrubs and many a trailing vine,
A woman stood, bending her dreamy eyes
Toward the east. A face once beautiful,
And noble still, the wind-blown veil revealed."

—MRS. ANNA H. DORSEY.

This was Elizabeth. She has a presentment
And leans against the angle of a turret,
Looking off to the east, and a man stands
Beside her looking in the same direction,
Zachary is much with Elizabeth these days.
Two travelers are coming up through the groves—
One a woman. See the gleam of her blue garments
Through the trees! A man a little behind,
Leading a white ass—The Virgin of Luke
In haste, Mary with her *Magnificat*,
Coming to sing it in Elizabeth's door.

MARY AND ELIZABETH.

"As a sun-burst flushing mountain-snow,
Fell the celestial touch of fire ere long
On the pale stillness of thy thoughtful brow,
And thy calm spirit brightened into song."—*Ave Maria*

Elizabeth and Zachary go down to meet
Mary. Elizabeth drawn on by a great
And increasing impulse, before her spouse ;

While Zachary prevented by an intuition
From the coming Lord, stands within the doors
Of his porch to witness, being unseen,
That wonderful meeting, and where the voice
Of the Virgin fell as fire upon his ears,
And swept through his priestly heart as a flame :
And that same magnificent moment, came —
As Elizabeth appears amid the pillars
At her door, Mary going up to meet
Her, surrounded by th' halo of her youth,
Of her beauty and of her joy to embrace
Elizabeth—Joseph a little behind ; —
Just come round a clump of cyprus trees
In a bend of the path below the house,
Saw those two heavenly women meet—“ th' going
Up of Mary in her inspiration those steps,”
Or “ broad marble flags,” “ the erect standing
Of Mary in that grand old vestibule,”
Having embraced her cousin, having stepped
A pace, or step back, looking up with face
As an angel into the heavens, pouring down
Strange light as Elizabeth's benediction
Breaks upon her ear, pouring down light
Still more and more as Mary sings. Joseph
Had not heard the salutation of Elizabeth,
Being yet far down in the path ; but sees Mary
With face as the sun looking steadfastly up
Into the heavens, from whence flooding lights
Are falling down all over her. He heard
Her voice uplifted and fell to the earth ;
The first strain of her celestial canticle
Swept him to the ground, where he lay ravished

To an ecstasy, hearing the joy of the Mother
Of God in her maternity poured out,
That magnificently marvelous intonation,
Caught up by invisibles, afar and more afar,
Again and again, swelling and dying away
In the farther-off and farther-off above :

My soul is ravished in the Lord,
In joy with God my Saviour!
The Lord hath helped His servant and
Hath shown His Maid His favor—
Magnificat ! Magnificat !

And as Joseph lay prostrate in adoration
He remembered it was as the rod and dove,
And when he had arisen, Mary had gone
Into Elizabeth's house, and Zachary stood
In the path to meet him. Zachary was dumb :
But he embraced him and kissed both cheeks
Of Joseph, and his hands, and his robe.
And lead him into his house with triumph ;
Though Joseph made not for the requirements
In his hands, to tarry, and the honors
That Zachary pressed upon him, confused
Him. He was a meek man, and thought himself
Of such not worthy ; but Zachary, his host,
Otherwise thought, and made him a banquet
And detained him a day and a night.
But the morning having come, Joseph took
His staff in his hand, and having commended
Mary unto Elizabeth, departed ;
But not till Mary knelt—she would not first
So suffer—and he gave her his blessing.

Contemplate the unconscious foster-father
 Of the Messiah, blessing th' young mother
 Of his Creator! Behold the tall figure
 Of Saint Joseph, the mystic look in his face,
 The beautiful Virgin in the first month
 Of her Divine pregnancy at his feet!
 "The Lord hath looked upon the humility
 Of his handmaid!" Joseph blessing Mary!
 Mary kneeling before Joseph for a blessing!
 Zachary and Elizabeth in the background!

And Joseph did violence to his heart
 To depart. Having journeyed with Mary
 And Jesus, how can he without them journey?



THE TRIAL OF SAINT JOSEPH.

"He was thine
 Filling with divine effulgence
 All thy being, heart and brain!

"All the fair earth bloomed around thee,
 With its shining seas and streams,
 With its music-shaken forests
 Drinking in the bright sunbeams.

"What were these to thee, my Mother?
 For thy Jesus was thy own;
 Thou wert his and He was reigning
 In thy heart as on His throne."—*Ave Maria.*

ALL the days of the absence of Joseph
 From Mary were as the days of exile;
 His father's business detained many days,
 Notwithstanding to the contrary, his will,

Or his affection ; for the will of Saint Joseph
Was as the Lord's, and he would not allow
The matter of Jacob to suffer in his hands ;
Nor did he know that the inheritance
Was for him, as Jacob, prudent father,
Knowing the zeal of the benevolence
Of his son, had not as yet made it known ;
But the affairs of Jacob, accomplished,
He returned with joy to Mary, to take
Her with him back to Nazareth. Mary
Met him with joy ; but a mystical sea
Had deepened between them since they parted ;
A great reserve had come over Mary
In presence of all. Her soul covets wings ;
The dove would fly to the clefts of th' rocks :
“*Show thy face, O, my beloved, in the clefts
Of the rocks !*” She came shy now to welcome
Her lord. She dropped at his feet and Joseph
Kissed her brow and raised her up with kind words.
With a sweet gravity she rose from her knees—
As one comes up from the communion-rails.
O, never came shy saint so up from the rails—
Face so dripping with the Presence—shrinking
From the crowd, desiring to be hidden away
With that One transcending Possession !
O, never was one conscious as Mary !
She only the more and more desired now
To dwell apart from every created eye ;
To brood over that one in-dwelling joy,
Incomprehensible—growing in her solitudes
Joseph saw her reserve ; but it kindled
His admiration of her and her holiness

More and more; there was a look in her face
Very grave, but more sweetness in her manners;
An admirable brooding light in her eyes.

They go home to Nazareth, and as the days
Progress Mary never appeared so modest
And so recollected withal as now.
They had taken up the same life as before
Mary went up to visit her cousin;
She so soon to be, even now the mother
Of th' very Prince of th' Heavenly Courts.

“ Eternity and Heaven
And the blissful angels die
Into nothingness before thee,
For their God, Himself is nigh.”

O, how nigh! Mother of God, unborn.

But after a time the increasing shyness
And silence of the dear Virgin troubled
Joseph. She was not the same as before—
Open, unreserved, unconscious. She was
Conscious now, shunning in her new sweetness
Even his eye and this pained Saint Joseph
Strangely at times; though he could not complain
Of it to Mary, whose lovely hands slackened
In no one thing that could make him happy;
And it came to pass to trouble him more,
That his father sent for him again,
To come and work with him in Galilee;
And he was detained until the sixth month;
But that at which he wrought being done,
He gathered his tools quickly to return.

It was his second absence from Mary
And he felt it more than the first;
For he had been anxious; but the cloud lifted,
Now that he was to go back to Mary.

(*Joseph on the way.*)

The wanes come and go in the fields, the men
From among the sheaves call out in salutation,
Joseph responding abstractedly, "the Lord
Be with thee!" Pressing by as heeding not,
O, undistract, grand, quiet, holy Saint!
Swift for that drawing homeward of the heart,
Bearing tranquilly concentrate on; gay—
Cheerfully exuberant—trace his footsteps,
A recollect air as an atmosphere
Around him, all of that rich gladness stirred
In its deep pervadings in him. His eyes
In their glad humilities drift to th' sward,
Observant that the flowers brighten as he draws
Nearer Nazareth—by such sight drawn on
Toward his own fairer Flower on the Hill:
His Rose and his Lily—"The Violet
Of Humility, the Lily of Chastity,
And the Rose of Charity."—ST. BERNARD.
Mary was all this to Joseph. The birds
In the hedges twitter as he passes.
He thanks God. All fragrances, all harmonies
Reach Joseph, and they reach him piously.
Nazareth lies before him—a blessed cot
A little way off in the purple haze
Of the harvest sky. Halting not even
At the well of the hamlet for a drink

Of the waters accounted at this time
Very sweet, Joseph presses on.

Mary

Is awaiting "upon the bench of stone,
The palm-tree awning of the rustic porch
Above her sacred head."* Perhaps she broods
That "*Ave!*" she has heard ring in her heart
All days since *that one*. Marvelousnesses
Of God, most sweet! condescensions most vast
And divinest to His humble handmaid!

"*Queen among sisters!*" "*Mother among virgins!*"

"Effulgent with the splendors of holiness!"

"Such brilliancy of heavenly gifts!" All-radiant!

"Rich with fruits as the prolific olive!"

Holy Joseph in his dear dispositions
Drawn preciously near—seeing a halo
On the grass before her feet, upon the wall—
About to, in his gladness, fall and kiss
Her mantle and her hands. The halo fades!
His virgin spouse!—his rose immaculate—
With child! He might have fallen, but something
Did hold him up to suffer. Poor Joseph!
In his sad astonishment to stand and speak
With Mary, or to th' pale, silent Virgin,
In her humilities, leaving to God
All her defense.

Sore, sharp afflicted Saint,
Unto the mountain and the wilderness
He fled, and cast himself upon the ground,
To let, at first, his heart there bleed alone;
And when at length he tried to think, but grew
Perplexed: "*Strange!*" evil may murmur here.

**Rosa Mystica.*

Ye that make words, is it more strange than all
In the mystical wood of mysteries?
Where tall mysteries stand as thick as trees,
Is not a mystery accordant? "Strange!"
That God would show in th' face of the whole world
Who is the father here? Had not just Joseph
Opportunely doubted, there had never been
That revelation grand we see in Matthew;
And then to be full troubled and to doubt,
It was but natural, and showed him still
To be a man, and that with conscience for God,
And who could be more brave than Abraham—
It was more to sacrifice Mary than Isaac.

He could not come unto himself at first,
But lay upon the ground as the strong man
Whose heart is by some hopeless arrow pierced,
And when he would have prayed there was laughter
And hisses in the wood—the demons mocked
At him; and one scoffed so distinct, he heard,
'This is the man that kept his spouse!' Then Joseph,
In his great integrity, arose, the tempter
To rebuke; and as it was night, returned
Unto his house and went unto his chamber up,
And shutting to his door, he seven times prayed,
And stretched himself, a martyr, on his bed;
And when, in the morning after, he came
From his chamber, behold, in that one night
His hair had turned to white. This it was made
Saint Joseph ever after look to be aged—
So much more aged than in years he was;
So fit a shadow of the Eternal Sire.

A glow came into Mary's spiritual cheeks,
But she was silent, and Joseph spake not.
Reserves are agonies between common souls
Of any common spouses; what then
Between these spouses? Oh, painfullest mystery!
Neither spake; and Joseph took no morsel,
But went to the fields. Most was he tempted
At night-time and in the fields when farthest
From Mary. When necessitated to come
Into her presence, he was the least tempted;
But a terrible influence from without
Seemed continually drawing him away
From her. No doubt the demons were busy
Around Joseph. Satan never drew near
To Mary to tempt her; but Joseph had
To take his buffets, both for his own goodness
And because he was Mary's guardian;
Satan hated Mary with especial hatred.
He had a fore-intuition she would crush
His old head. He had entered the lists,
Not only against this Saint, but Mary;
He was determined not to be baffled.
He spent all his malice and renewed
It. And when we remember the ruin
He has wrought with man, we can estimate
What it was, and what Saint Joseph withstood;
But Satan never got hold of a man
More able, and that most by his patience.
Albeit, what perplexed Joseph most was,
He saw not his invisible tormentors;
He saw not what he had to combat with,
And they suggested reasonings so natural.

Joseph sat upon a fallen tree in th' wood ;
' All children have fathers,' said the voice that kept
A conversation up around him. Joseph
Answered not, but sat with his eyes fixed
On th' ground. There is nothing in a good man
So discomfits the devil as patience.
Here he had been at work forty days.
And what had he gained ? There he was waiting
For God to illuminate this mystery ;
And had not once sinned ; nor once judged Mary ;
But had fasted sore and still held to his peace.
It most discouraged Satan, he could not
Move him—if he could only stir him up !
Patience discourages the devil.
There is but one way now, he must put on
The livery of the angel and stand
Advocate for integrity, and show
Joseph that it would be a hypocrisy
For him to continue to live with Mary.

(*Fortieth night.*)

“ SAINT JOSEPH, MODEL OF JUSTICE, PRAY FOR US ! ”

Saint Joseph upon his bed reflected—
Over again, the child would soon be born,
His family would look for him to present
Unto the Lord within his Holy house
As of his marriage born—and *it was not*.
But on the morrow he would flee and so
Not harm Mary, or his own integrity ;
So would he take the seeming blame and go,
Leaving his tribe to cover up his name
With shame for desertion of so sweet a spouse,

Rather than cast one shadow on her, or act
 An untruthful part. He sees no other way.
 His staff is ready and the small bundle
 Of his clothes; but most innocent souled man,
 Unlike others who choose night, he waits
 For light; and Satan thought he had conquered,
 Or was going to, poor devil! When God
 Was only showing the invincibleness
 Of justice in the man that he had chosen
 To fill his place on the earth.

‘Draw off!’ off!

‘But a little!’ said the arch-fiend to his minions;
 ‘Let him sleep, it will give him strength to flee;
 Though as for that, I would take him up
 And bear him as on the wings of the wind
 From her, only he’s a saint, we can tempt
 But cannot touch; hence, arrange *just* his dreams.’

Poor boasting Lucifer, God has his dream
 On th’ way for this man. God is his keeper.

“Behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in his dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”—MAT. I, 20, 21.

“*Fear not to take.*” A Christian should not doubt
 Where all is not told. It is pleasant, though,
 To know the old tradition of his absence;
 It makes the simple word “*take*” so lucid
 And so natural. How many things do need
 The circumstance, and then they are so plain.
 He had stood from her in purpose, divorced;

He had not acknowledged her his spouse
Since his return; but now he understood.
God willed he should appear in Nazareth,
Before all Israel, in his Holy House,
On earth and in Heaven, as Mary's husband;
And his joy was so great he arose and prayed;
And after that he fell into a sleep
And heard angels sing within his chamber;
And as it was beginning to be dawn,
He had another dream :

“ Fair angels past by in seemly bands
All gilt, with gilded baskets in their hands :
Some as they went the blue-eyed violets strow,
Some spotless lilies in loose order throw,
Some did the way with full-blown roses spread,
Their smell divine and color strangely red : ”

“ Not such our dull gardens proudly wear,
Whom weather's taint or wind's rude kisses tear,
Such I believe was the first rose's hue,
Which at God's word in beauteous Eden grew,
Queen of the flowers which made that orchard gay,
The morning blushes of the spring's new day.”

“ With sober face a heavenly maid walks in,
She looks all fair, no taint of native sin
Through her whole body writ : immoderate grace
Spoke things far more than human in her face ;
It cast a dusky gloom o'er all the flowers,
And with full beams their mingled light devours.”

“ An angel straight broke from the shining cloud
And prest his wings and with much reverence bowed,”
“ And thus his sacred message sweetly said :
Hail full of grace ! thee, the whole world shall call
Above all blest ! thee who shall bless them all.
The virgin-womb in wondrous sort shall shroud
Jesus, the God ! (and then again he bowed.)
Conception the Great Spirit shall breathe on thee,
Hail thou, who must God's spouse, God's mother be !
With that his seeming form to heaven he reared,
She low obeisance made and disappeared.”—*Chaucer.*

His dreams refreshed Joseph : they told great things,
And revealed them so calm and fragrantly ;
He came from his chamber down in haste ;
But in that night Mary's mother had died,
And when Joseph entered the apartments
Of Anna, he found Mary by her mother,
And the heart of Joseph smote him sore,
And he had great contrition for his doubts,
And for that which he had purposed to do,
And he fell at her feet and confessed.
And Mary said, ' Thee I have never blamed,'
' I have seen thy sorrow, and would I not
Have spoken, but " the secret of the King "
Must I not keep ? ' ' It was made to me known
I should not speak.' ' Thou hast not sinned.' Joseph
Insisted. Mary said, ' Thou insistest,'
' I forgive thee, and for the Holy One
That is within me.' And Joseph adored
The Lord in the womb of His mother,
And kissing the feet of his spouse and hem
Of her robe, arose consoled. '*Defender
Of my virginity !*' murmured Mary,
Melted to a sweet flood of tears. So was
She the first to give Joseph that title.

" ST. JOSEPH, COMFORT OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US."



FUNERAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S
MOTHER.

“ As night blooming cerus, whose beauties expand
When deep cloud is deepest.”

AND when it was known that Anna was dead,
The women of the hamlet came and lamented
With Mary. They saw her state, but spake not
Of it to her, but had great compassion
Toward her; and the most tender was the wife
Of Zebedee, Salome, who wrapped the dead
In a sheet with spices—the sacred dead,
Even Anna, the flesh that bore Mary—
And to procure which she spent the silver
That had fallen to her in a legacy :
For this her flesh shall be apostles.
Then they placed the body upon a bier
And lit candles—the number for the dead—
And Mary put on garments of sackcloth
And sat down by the bier; and Joseph put
On sackcloth also and sat beside Mary ;
And the friends of Anna, all they that came
To weep for her, sat upon the ground, their heads
Covered the number of days appointed
Behold sitting upon the ground by the bier
Of Anna, Mary in her tears! Anna
Had been a precious mother to Mary ;
Her last surviving parent now is dead !
She is an orphan now ! Mary's mother
Is dead ! Dead, too, in such a tender hour !
She would so soon need a mother. How could

She do without her in the time coming?
At such an hour what is not a mother
To a daughter? Such a mother as Anna!
She sits, her white face muffled in the pall
That hangs down over th' bier. Perhaps Jesus
Wept in th' womb of his mother—a sweetness
Diffused through her being. She leans her head
In its tears upon her unborn Consoler.
Mary could bear anything with Jesus

Anna was buried by the side of her spouse,
And Joseph caused the scribe to record
His marriage with Mary in the book
Of the synagogue at Nazareth, and led
Her unto her house before the people;
Thus was their marriage confirmed in the town:
And at the eve of the day he planted
A vine by the tomb;—*Mary watching Joseph*
Transplanting the vine—‘Oh, that thou couldst
But have lived to have seen *Him*, mother!’



INCARNATION MONTH'S COMPLETING.

SCENE—*The Bank of the River of Cison.*

Joseph felling an almug tree to make
A cradle; stops to hear the angels sing
On the banks above him.

(*Mary within her house.*)

A MESSENGER come down from Hebron:
Mary receiving a basket from Elizabeth,
And setting before the servant of her cousin
Bread and figs: he partaking, wondering th' bread

That she gives him is so sweet. Who would not
 Have ate bread from the hands of the Virgin,
 Baked at her little hearth at Nazareth?
 She inquires for Elizabeth and the child,
 And seeing the man makes haste to go, plucks
 The lily in the pot that had been Anna's,
 Kisses th' blossom and sends it to Elizabeth.
 The messenger journeyed with the flower;
 It faded not, and when he had given
 It into the hand of Elizabeth, it had
 Not withered.

Elizabeth's servant being gone,
 See Mary open th' basket from her cousin.

MARY.

For *Him!* for *Him!*

Contemplate her! Mary
 Examines each tiny garment: the pleased
 And holy look in her face—taking out
 The cunning-work from th' hand of Elizabeth:
 In the midst of the basket a letter.

THE LETTER OF ELIZABETH TO HER COUSIN, THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

‘ELIZABETH TO MARY

Sendeth greetings

*and pious salutation: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed
 is the fruit of thy womb! Wherefore should I find favor that
 the Mother of my Lord should accept from me a present! Peace:
 the Lord is with thee. Amen.*

ELIZABETH, WIFE OF ZACHARY.’

Mary reading the letter of Elizabeth,
 Recalling the magnificent morning—
 The time when Elizabeth's babe leaped.

(*Morning the day after.*) Joseph had taken
 Possession of his new shop—the house framed
 For Mary—th' building which was interrupted
 By the business of Jacob—Joseph going
 To Bethlehem: and when Anna had died,
 The old house where the parents of Mary
 Had lived was large enough and had become
 Too precious to leave, or when Jesus Christ
 Had been conceived there and Joseph knew this,
 He would never choose live anywhere else.
 We see, moreover, here, how one may leave,
 Even a great Saint, a work not accomplished.
 How God changes our good designs for better;
 And how, when God changes, the change appears
 Always more beautiful than the design
 It was beautiful for Joseph to build
 A house for Mary, but more beautiful
 To build but a shop near Mary's door,
 And that Mary and he should continue
 To live in the old house of Anna.

Joseph is consecrating his new shop
 By his first work in it. He is measuring
 With a rod in his hand and planing
 Some fine boards with much care. Speed on thy plane,
 Glorious carpenter! Never was mechanic
 So honored before. Saint Joseph is making
 A cradle for Jesus! Speed on thy plane!
 Angels would like t' do what thou art doing.
 Polish down smooth the hard and fragrant wood!
 Make the dark surface shine like a mirror!
 The tree grew for this; and the ages will grow

And crumble, and this thy work at its shrine,
Generations on their knees, looking upon,
Bow worshipfully down. Happiest wood!
Where God, humbled to an infant, shall lie:
For this the dews of heaven watered the tree
And it grew. There is another tree growing
For Him; for *Him* before that He is born!
But it would break thy heart, Joseph,
To know of it now!

Some days afterward:

Mary, sitting by her lattice, employed
Upon some lovely embroidery—Joseph
Bringing in the new cradle, very shining,
So well had he polished it. Behold, now,
It is so sweet! Joseph setting th' cradle
At the feet of Mary—down at the feet
Of Mary—and standing back a pace—
Mary looking down into the cradle.
There's no use to try to describe her face,
Human and superhuman! the face
Of Mary in the days of her expectation!
The Church has a vision, and so has named
A time for the "Expectation of Mary,"
And given it a feast before the Christmas.
Mary looking into the cradle—Joseph
Standing, observing, in recollect silence,
A blanket that lies dropped upon the lap
Of Mary, or a little embroidered quilt
Mothers provided to wrap their first-born
In when carried for their presentation;
And from which grew the custom in the Church
Of embroidering robes for the christening.

If it is so delightful for mothers
To work for their babes before born, to make
Those little robes and wrappings up, what must
It have been for Mary, mother "with joys
Such as no other mother ever had?"

(Eve of the Bethlehem journey.)

"The time has come the world should see the face
Of Jesus Christ." "Where shall He be born?" "Can
He leave that spot to which He was first drawn
From the Bosom of the Father down?" Can
He find a spot more lovely in the whole world
In which to be born than Mary's old home?
"Doesn't Jesus Christ love Nazareth?" "Isn't Jesus
Patriotic?" "Jesus Christ, Mary's Son, loves
Nazareth; but Jesus Christ is a Priest
And has a vocation making a demand,
And He must go out from His mother's house
And His own city; must begin before born
To sacrifice, for He must be "the Prince
Of detachment;" "or it were too much to give
One place both the glory of the Incarnation
And of His birth. He must, like a king,
Distribute His gifts;"* or Bethlehem was
The old head city of His house. He must go
Home to be born; so was He patriotic.
His Eternal Father can stir a purpose.

"And it came to pass in those days there went from Cæsar Augustus a decree that the world should be enrolled, and the enrolling was made, and every one went in his own city to be enrolled."—
LUKE.

*The sweet argument of Faber.

Then was Joseph great distressed on account
Of Mary. Should he leave her at such a time?

‘ With none to care in this dear time
For thee but old Eleazer,
I cannot leave; and yet must heed
The call of an imperial Cæsar.

But there is what the prophet saith :
Arise, my spouse, my dove,
We make that journey now to Bethlehem,
“ My fair one, come away, my love ! ”

The answer in sweet Mary’s face,
Is sweeter than an angel’s ;
Said Joseph, wrap the winter robe
And bind the winter sandals.

The wind is rough along the road,
The winter winds are out ;
Fear not, my arm can guide the beast,
Along this blessed route.



FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM.

THE beast jogs on—the storm howls
In the distance, but erewhile
There is a mystery in Mary’s face
More charming than a smile.

The beast jogs on, the storm mutters loud,
The globular drops begin to come,
Large and ominous—slow between—
And Joseph in his anxiousness dumb,

Looks in the tender Virgin's patient face
And silent lifts his heart for more of Mary's grace ;
And she, sweet Virgin, in the blast begins to calm contrast
This drear commencing journey with the lovely past,
That other journey when the joyful spring all favors poured—
The splendor of the day, the splendor of the night adored
Her present God ; she came, the mountains leaped, her foot-
steps neared,
The wilderness rejoiced and flowers sprang wherever she
appeared—

Sweet maiden-mother of the Lord !

Sweet Virgin-bearer of the Word !

Now all is dearth, a boding sadness and a sad decay,*
The cold and desolated, winter-shrouded day ;
The rough winds whistle loud their wild complaint,
The sea-bird utters a more sharpened plaint,
The torrents dash with dark redoubled waves,
And from the fastness of the rock—the solitary caves—
The wilderness resounds—the panther's startling cry—
And beasts that from their drowning coverts fly,
And nathless miracles continued flashing here,
Albeit not of kind the timid heart to cheer.

Now, in their way, behold the huge rock-slide,
Washed by the torrent from the mountain-side,
Athwart the narrow path, so neither traveler, or ass,
Much less, may burdened woman hope to safely pass—
When Mary comes, divide to give the Virgin way,
The torrent backward turn ; and all the gloomy day,
Such marvels strike the observant Joseph's eyes,
His heart, considering, stands in poised surprise,

* Paraphrase of Orsini.

Till he beholds her cross her hands her pure breast o'er
And raise her tender eyes towards Heaven to adore—
Tears glisten in them now like morning's crystal drops;
Now the angelic trust in her sweet face the emotion stops;
She's just consented fresh to suffer all on earth
With Him in her sweet womb she brings to sacred birth;
And now, though wind and beast are out and wild,
Her pallid face is only radiant and mild:
And Joseph caught the charm and heavenlike trust;
He walked by Mary's side and must.

And fairer yet, it hath been told
And handed down in legend gay as gold,
That when it would have been, lo, for our Queen there was
no night,
A thousand angels round her threw such dazzling radiance
bright:
The blessed light was equal unto day the most serene
For the encampment round from Paradise—by Joseph also
seen,
Who with our august Lady, grave responded to the angel
lays,
And charmed their Heavenly Guardians, by human hymns
of praise,
And they from their warm wings waft sleep to Mary, mother
of their God,
Who circled by the angels round sank sweet to slumber on
the sod;
While blessed Joseph, faithful spouse, seeing the mistress
of the universe
So well cared for, reposed in peace, as the old chroniclers
rehearse..

But of all the choirs of angels seen at night attendant on
their journeying Queen,
Not one but screened their shining forms at morn, nor
through the day an angel face was seen.
From sun to set they traveled weariedly, dear travelers;
thank God! at length, the last drear day
Had come, and when another came, the last trace of the
sullen storm had haply crept away:
Yet on that old world's last departing day 't was sadly com-
fortless and cold,
And tender Mary suffered more than ever may be wrote or
told.

‘ Beloved, cheer thee up!’ Saint Joseph kindly said,
While, as he saw the patient Virgin’s drooping head,
In his afflicted eyes the large tears shone
That almost checked his dear, courageous tone;
But then the fragrant sigh of Mary untold sweetness shed,
And Joseph, pressing on the beast, the bridle firmer led.







Bethlehem.

Bethlehem's Reception of the Mother of God when she came to her bearing her God and her King to be born in her City.

BETHLEHEM signifies the "House of Bread." "Doubtless the Lord ordered the name." The Lord would give from thence the True Bread from Heaven.

'Tis twenty-fourth December day,
The evening hour is nearing four,
All day the lengthened caravans
Into the crowded city pour.

A man there comes, 'a Galilean by his speech,'
'His young wife wears a Nazareth dress,'—
How young for him! 'There's something in her face,'
The housewife thinks, 'I wish that I could bless
Her with a place and rest; but we are full:'
'Her dear condition pleads!'
'But we have guests, 't would spoil the feast'—
And pleasure intercedes
And robs her of the merit. O what a chance
The Lord has offered to have given!
Poor Bethlehemitess! you have failed
And missed the King of Heaven!

Said Mary, when rejected from the door,
‘For whom the Saviour comes,’ For whom
The Prince of Peace and Life, I bear
Within my blessed womb!

Said Mary, when rejected from the door,
‘If they but knew, they would adore’—
‘They do not feel His presence yet,’
‘Their souls are torpid now,’
‘But they shall be aroused,
Undoubtedly and glow;
God looketh downward from the skies,
Undoubtedly these souls are precious in his eyes,
Since He for them is now about
His dear Son to bestow:
And doubtless they are full,
And more, they do not know.’

Joseph was grieved; for himself, he thought not,
As for himself, he was but too happy
To share humiliations with Mary;
But was anxious on account of her state,
And knew how worthy she was of hospitality.
He had never seen inhospitality
Shewn to her before. He had not supposed
Any one could be inhospital to Mary;
That any one could refuse to receive
Mary to their house, or their confidence.
Poor Joseph! he would have been astonished
Had he lived in this age, we think, to see
Mary shut out at so many doors, had
He been told some of these were called Christians,—

Christians! and shut the door at the same time
In the sweet face of the sinless mother
Of the very Lord they profess to worship,
Saying, 'she is but as any woman,'
Saying virtually, 'it's well to proffer
Loyalty to the Son and invite Him to come,
But He must not bring with Him His mother.'

Ah, poor, simple Joseph! he never lived
Among heretics to th' Blessed Virgin,
Never dreamed of heresy against Mary;
Never surmised any one could be bitter
Against the Mother of Jesus, or treat
Her with disrespect, or with ingratitude;
And this first lesson of ignorant distrust
Pained him; and then to have Messiah
So treated, even before He was born;
The jewels of God had been committed
Unto Joseph, and he could find no place
For them. Doubts, haste and responsibilities press
On his reverent and tender heart. He stands
At the foot of the lane of the last house.
They have asked at every door. "Jesus Christ
Has slighted no one." "It is all have slighted
Him." All have had the sublime opportunity
To have had Jesus Christ born at their house
And have refused. "Earth has seldom witnessed
Such a scene." Mary, Joseph, the Eternal Word
In the uncharitable streets of Bethlehem—
A winter night closing in. Joseph feels
The presentiment: all things are converging
To the eternal point. Jesus is waiting

To come and he can find, for Him, no place
To be born in. The village is occupied
With doings "more important, according
To th' world's estimate, what is important."
Mary and Joseph had never before been
So destitute of all human assistance,
As at this the time of their greatest need.
Joseph stands almost distraught. They cannot
Stay out under the stars. Then said Joseph,
'My courage fails;' then said Mary, 'We have done
What we can do. Let us again ask God
To show us what to do and commit ourselves
To his providence.' "Doubtless," said Joseph,
"Some mystery underlies all this," and he knelt
By the famished ass on which Mary sat,
And prayed; and when he had prayed, remembered
To have seen as they rested under a tree,
Before they came up to the city, a grotto
Where shepherds had been accustomed to shelter
Their flocks at night. As the twilight deepens
Joseph and Mary descend the hill, they find

THE CAVE.

"A sort of a grotto with an erection before it, so common in those lands by which depth and coolness were obtained. The cavern seems to draw them like a spell. Souls are strangely drawn when within the vortex of a divine vocation."—FABER.

Joseph finds in the cave two white heifers
And an ox. The poor beasts kneel down as Mary
Comes in. There is besides a stone crib
That is empty, and a heap of fresh straw—
The preparations God makes for Himself!

Joseph is seen sweeping th' cave and making
A couch for Mary of th' straw. Mary divides
Th' scraps of provision left for their supper.

EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE CAVE.

Stars are drifting grandly over this spot.

'Are there more stars?' Joseph is standing at the door
Of the cave. 'Something is going to happen!'

'The mysteriousness perceptibly deepens.'

Joseph goes back to look upon Mary.

'Mary stands looking into the empty crib;'

She is very silent, but her eye burns

With a deep light, and "Joseph speaks not

A word, but paces up and down the dim

And mysterious little cavern-stable,

Curiously watching Mary." "She is

Just lifting her eyes from the crib." He has seen

On her face something he has never seen

There before, "that sweet impatience perceptible

In all his moves to-night increases." "His heart

Is so hot, too, for waiting!" But Joseph

Feels an awe so deep flowing to his heart—

God is too perceptibly in this place—

He must fall back to his watch by the door;

But before he goes he will yet prostrate

More profoundly at the feet of Mary,

And again beseech her sweet forgiveness

For all his doubts that had been. "That he had

Ever doubted was alway an humiliation

To Joseph," and he said, 'Is it possible

That I shall, indeed, behold my dear Lord

And Redeemer within your chaste arms?

That I shall adore Him there and shall see
 His Divine Face? That I shall touch *Him* and live?
 Whence comes to me bliss such as no one could
 Ever have deserved? What offering have
 I? What treasures that I can, in return,
 Lay at His Feet?' And our august Lady
 Replied, 'The great God comes into the world
 Not to find riches, for he needs them not;
 For treasures He would not descend from Heaven.
 Arise, Joseph!' And Joseph kissed seven times
 The floor under her feet and withdrew to his watch.

NINE O'CLOCK IN BETHLEHEM-CAVE.

Mary seated upon the little couch of straw surveying the stable.

She takes with her ineffable unborn
 An inventory of it all. "She sees the beasts,
 The darkness, th' straw." "It is just as they would have
 It." "For nine months, at least, if not before,
 She had seen only with His eyes and loved
 Only with his heart." His tastes are her tastes,
 "His standards were her standards." Th' young mother
 Of a God born to redeem th' world by penance
 Loves the cave as it is. The beautiful hour
 Has come for which she was born immaculate;
 A light flits over her sweet face.

"As the Daughter of the Prophets sat on her little couch of
 straw that night, what visions swept up to her through the chaos
 and darkness of centuries past."—ORSINI.

Joseph sleeps at the doorway and th' angels
 Sing who surround Mary. Now they invite

Her to repose, and Mary is obedient
To the recommendation of the angels;
But kneels first by her little bed of straw :
Mary prays in Bethlehem before Jesus
Is born therein, thus consecrating the cave
For her Divine Son to be born therein ;
And then she sinks into that dear straw couch.
It is rather cold, but all is so sweet and still ;
Her two shoes sit evenly together by her couch—
Her veil is spread for a blanket in the crib—
Elizabeth's basket at the foot of the crib.

Ten o'clock in the cave ! Mary sleeps ;
The cave is in stillness and darkness, except
A little ring of light upon the ground
Around the dim burning lantern on the earth,
A few paces from the bed of Mary, where
Joseph had left it for the night. It is chill
And cavernlike ; but the place seems still full
Of angels ; “ which we almost rather feel
Than see—then we see them so distinct,”
But all so still, “ such mystery in their faces ;”
Not a sound is heard : the very restless beasts
Are still. They are not asleep—the beasts—yet :
Their large eyes are wide open set ; but each limb
So still. See that ox with his large head prone
Upon the earth—his wide-branching horns
In the shadow—his full ox-eyes wide-open—
And old Assinus so accustomed to the sight
Of Mary, stands on his knees wondering
As the humbled ox beside him. The darkness
Deepens. Th' angels are withdrawing.

Eleven o'clock!

The stillness has perceptibly increased.
The beasts are now asleep. They have not stirred
Once upon their knees; but their eyes are closed:
Mary is alone with the beasts in the cave—
Three angels standing outside the entrance—
The angels may not now intrude,—Joseph
In his profound sleep at the mouth of th' cave,
Is nearer to Mary because he is her spouse.
Nevertheless Mary sleeps. A rose leaf
Fallen upon her lips, more beautiful,
Had not stirred. It was sublime—the stillness
In that cave—It was godlike—as eternity—
Sleeping in an ecstasy with Jesus!

Twelve o'clock! Awoke with the sweet pressure
Of her longing, she knelt down to pray,
And her face and her body shone, knelt there
Before the Father. "She who encompasses
God pours out her soul," and it seems as though
Even Mary, whose sweet wishes all sweet rest
In the dear hand of God, could not wait for God;
So wrestles her flaming soul to launch out
Upon the ocean of this great motherhood.
The Immaculate Bride of the Holy Ghost
Knows the transcendent hour is near—so longs
To measure its depths—to elasp her Treasure.
She only uplifts her sweet arms in ecstasy;
But dares to ask to see that Sacred Face.
The dart has sped. The shaft that cannot be clipt
Has reached the Bosom of the Holy Ghost,
And at once she was wrapped in a light

In which she was indistinguishable.

“ In secrecy with God ”—alone with God—
Was the Mother of God one great moment
Or era, hidden.

“ Just as the rising
Of the mysterious constellation Virgo
Announced midnight, amid the solemn stillness
Of nature, concealed by a luminous cloud,
Th’ almah of th’ great Messaic prophecy
Brought forth Him whom God Himself had produced
Before the hills, and who was begotten
From all eternity.”* Praised be God!
As she prayed, she knew not her Divine Son
Was born, save as she felt that virtue had
From her gone—as Jesus afterward felt
When some one had touched Him in the crowd.
She saw “ a most clear and beautiful light
Upon the ground,” and in midst of the light
Her Divine Babe “ lay smiling upon th’ skirt
Of her robe beside her”—“ sudden appeared
Like a rainbow emerging from a cloud,”
And astonished she fell down to adore—
“ The bloom of God flushing her all over ”
As her eyes feed sweetly upon this Child.
“ She sees His loveliness ”—the loveliness
Of the First-born of God and her own flesh.
She is the first creature beholding God,
And receives the first blessing of Jesus.
The new Saviour blesses His pre-saved one,
Who meets Him as the first of her people

* Orsini.

To be saved ; for herself and her people.
O how meet ! that He who comes to redeem
A race, and that so extensively lost,
Should be embraced first by the noblest one
Of th' race, as when Mary saluted her Babe—
He upon th' ground of th' cave, she on her knees.
She who had alone in her pure existence
Sprung up and grown as the one white lily
Among virgins for this one exalted purpose ;
She who “ had been clothed in its conception
With new purity ” was also now “ clothed
With a new and magnificent pureness ”
For this ineffable motherhood : all
Of the garments of her soul were enlarged :
A new charity, a new divineness fell
From heaven over her : she is gifted
With all things worthy of th' Mother of th' God
Of the Incarnation—fortitude, trust,
Longanimity, calmness, a whole world
Of gentleness, serenest sweetness, courage :
She was made worthy to be the Mother
Of God manifest in the flesh.

Mary

Is kneeling still over the Incarnate God ;
The angels of the Holy Family
Are bowed around her. “ There is something
Always that allures familiarity in Jesus ”—
“ Something in the little imprisoned God.”
“ It reached up Its little hands.” Arch-Michael,
Or Gabriel, would have presented the Babe
To His Mother, but the sweet Eternal Child
Prefers the hands of His human Mother

To touch Him first. It is her privilege.
Mary uplifts her Babe in tenderest adoration,
And the angels fall down at her feet;
The Virgin holds her Babe, and the angels
Adore their God in th' arms of a mother—
An Almighty Father with the Holy Ghost—
Heaven full of angels looking down.

Mary sits down with the Babe upon the straw,
Gabriel opens the bundle of bands,
Michael stands beside the Virgin and Child—
Mary hears th' sky beginning to waken
All through its vaults with music—the *Gloria*
In Excelsis Deo beginning to break.
Raphael touches Saint Joseph, asleep at the door;
Joseph looks up into th' very bright face
Of Raphael all in a beautiful wonder—
His eyes, his heart drenched with a great light—
He stands a moment, great Saint as he is, dazed—
The cavern is full of light, and in the centre
Mary, seated upon the gold-burning straw,
In the beauty of her virgin maternity,
Is swathing an infant that she holds
Upon her knees, “from the body of which
Issues rays of light that illumine the cave
And all it contains.”* He saw that Mary
was crowned with a new diadem of rays,
And her fingers sparkled as they swathed the child,
And filled with great confidence, he approached
In admiration to look upon the Child
From whose body the rays of light issued,

* Orsini.

And the songs of the angels were suspended,
And there was a silence when he approached,
And in the midst of the silence he heard,
A voice address itself to him in his heart,
“ *This is my Son !* ” and he fell before the Child,
And the hymns recommenced, “ *Glory to God !* ”
For the time the songs continued—in their height
So jubilant the whole cave shook—the ground
Under his face and knees was palpitant ;
And when there was a significant pause—
A magnificent silence in the cave—
He arose upon his knees and saw Mary,
THE MIDNIGHT CAVE AND THE INFANT JESUS
And adored. And as he looked on the Babe
There was a confusion, and three shepherds
Entered, some say four, and a lamb followed
The shepherds, and the shepherds prostrated
Before the Child ; the lamb also knelt down :
Behold !

“ His court, His kingly court attend ! ”
“ A virgin mother, calm and fair,
Lost in adoring rapture there,
A venerable man with hoary hair,
And face with joy elate.”
“ And blameless shepherds bent the knee ! ”

And the joy of the shepherds when they looked
Upon the Infant was great. Simple souls,
They kissed the hands and the feet of the Babe
In their innocent boldness and questioned
Mary. Childlike men, they are not afraid
Of Him. They do not know why one should not
Touch God.

Joseph saw the shepherds looking

Upon the Babe and then upon Mary,
In their simplicity and in their joy,
And Mary looking upon the Infant,
And at the same time the Infant looking
On the shepherds, and what was the happiness
Of Joseph as the Babe looked on him ! joy
Diffused in the heart of Joseph as often
As the Babe looked upon him. O, Joseph,
It is so good to have the shepherds here
To help you to adore the newborn God !

Th' shepherds remarked a star shone through th' roof
Of the cave—in an opening of the rock—
And told Mary, how as they watched the flocks,
That night the angel of the Lord appeared
And informed them of the birth of her Son.
And one of their number, a young shepherd
Who wore upon his head a crown of flowers,
He had plucked from the cliffs the evening before
For his betrothed, removed the fragrant chaplet
From his own head, and untwining the wreath
Scattered the roses over th' crib* and knelt—
And a canticle of great sweetness swept
Through the cave—and the shepherds said, looking
Upon one another, ' It is the angels,'
And fell on their faces before the Child,
And when th' angels ceased the shepherds lifted
Their brows bold and beautiful in the light
That upon them fell from the Divine Babe
And repeated the canticle th' angels had sang :

* Orsini.

And when they had satisfied their devotion,
They kissed again the feet of the Infant
And went back to their flocks singing the high
And happy canticle of praise they had learned
By the way.

Regard Joseph reëntering
The cave—having guided the shepherds out—
It was so good to have the shepherds here ;
Now it is good to have Mary and the Babe all
To himself again.

Mary is seated
Upon a low seat, her Babe in her lap.
There is a bright halo around the Babe
And another halo around the mother.
Joseph begins to burn—the ardent heart
Of Joseph, and his kind hands and his arms
To infold the Babe ; but a humility
Restrained him : then radiant Mary divined
What was in his heart and arose and advanced
And put the Divine Babe into his arms,
And he received It with great reverence.
“ Shadows only speak by the shade they cast.”
“ We are reminded whose shadow Saint Joseph
Was.” The angels are not so happy now
As Saint Joseph. “ And how exultant were
The angels that night ;” “ how sang to the shepherds,”
“ How circled and wheeled round in circles
Over that midnight cave.” But the angels
Have not embraced Him. Man are th’ privileged.
How the angels exult to see that man Joseph.
The angels have always loved Saint Joseph,
That man with a heart so like an angel.

How they pour their songs out over that cave,
How they crowd in to see Jesus in the arms
And upon the breast of Joseph. "Michael
The angels envy to-night" as he stands
Nearest to th' tenderly bright Infant King,
"All along they have envied Gabriel,"
But more than all they envy Joseph. Mary,
Somehow they could not envy.

Joseph stands
Holding the beautiful newborn Saviour
In his arms—Mary knelt before her spouse—
The light emanating from the bright Babe,
Ascending unto the silvery crown
Of his white hairs, illuminating his head—
Falling down over his garments to his feet—
Falling over Mary, over the lamb
That has come to kneel—its white wool touched
As a fleece of gold against the sombre skirt
Of Mary's dress. Mary wears black for Anna,—
Another one of those shadows of Calvary
Upon the Bethlehem floor—the Mother
Of Messiah in sackcloth. Mary kisses
Th' feet of the Babe in ecstasy, light
Falling over her more and more—Joseph,
Heaven in the cradle of his arms, gazing
Into Its little Face. Who can sing here?

Who can paint the Infant Saviour?

Who can paint an Infant God?

Paint the sweet glows of the Face

Mantled by the Precious Blood!

Who can sing the fairness of a mother
Who never knew a stain—
Not a shadow on her human whiteness
Of the thrall and of the pain,—

Shining in her virgin snows,
Shining in her virgin splendor?
Who of Joseph's face any
Sweet account can render?

Saint Joseph represents what Father now!
Blessed Saint Joseph are you not repaid
For all you have suffered for Mary? Paid!
O, don't mention it! Joseph has *Jesus*!
O, Saint Joseph, are not you recompensed
For your years of subjugation of th' flesh,
For all of your privations, charities, toils?
O, don't mention it, Saint Joseph has *JESUS*.

Stands the gentle, radiant Joseph,
With the sweet Incarnate Flower
Speechless till the matin hour.

O, my father! fragrant spirit,
Husband of the Mystic Rose,
Shed thy perfumes through my spirit,
Stir me with the breeze that o'er thee blows.

Give me to my breast to fold Him,
Father of all fathers mild!
Let me clasp the shining Child!

Let my heart absorb in ardors
This new Life that gives us life,
Born this ever-goldened morning,
King of Peace and end of strife!

Breathe thy spirit o'er my homage,
Breathe the fire thy fervor knows,
Touch me with thy seraph glows,

Flood me with thy mystic sweetness,
Burn, O, burn! these vails away
With this Infant and His mother
And thyself this blessed day.

“ ST. JOSEPH, AFTER MARY FIRST ADORER OF JESUS, INFANT,
PRAY FOR US.”

For a few days after many came to the cave,
And then the tide slack'd off: Some of these praised
God, and some saw a very fair, young child;
But only a human child and caviled;
And others proffered hospitality now too late.
Mary would keep the law which suffered not
She should leave her chamber for forty days;
Neither would she leave the chamber God
Had provided. Perhaps the Daughter of th' prophets
Looked down the ages even then and saw
The long line of pilgrims in the desert
Coming home to the foot of the crib.
Poor, sweet parent-spot of Christianity!
Not for a palace would the blessed mother
Have exchanged that Bethlehem-room in th' rocks.

Mary and Joseph would kneel by the crib
For hours—the hours seeming but as moments ;
And likewise the lamb remained by the crib ;
And at night, the glow in the cave that came
From the Child made a warmth while it lasted ;
But the glow lessened in the third night
And it was cold, and the Infant was touched
With the cold and Mary took off her cloak
And wrapped It, and the lips of the mother
And Babe were blue. Must such a tiny thing
Of beauty, must such a tender mother
Suffer ? Must the new Heavenly Child know
The woe and the cold so soon ? O, poverty !
Mary was cold and the Babe moaned. Joseph
Was troubled. The wind has risen and is sharp.
They must have fuel ; but what could he find ?
How could he go out in the night-time and storm ?
He knelt down to implore his angel
And went out simply, and finding a few thorns
And brambles gathered of them what he could
And hastened in, and when he had entered
There was fuel by th' rock where he had prayed ;
Then Joseph, kneeling down, thanked God and took
Of the wood and kindled a fire, and Mary
Warmed the Infant by the little flame
On the rock. And the fuel did not fail ;
And Joseph built a fire in the cavern
In the evening and th' morning, and th' fuel
Was sufficient.

Mary is meditating
In the still, sweet face of the Babe—Joseph
Gazing into the red flame upon th' rock,

Sees "men as trees walking," one more glorious
Walked with them, the features in whose face
Were as the features of the Babe that lay
Upon th' knees of Mary, warming in the flame ;
And Joseph saw, also, that which was past.
Now, it was an orchard, and in the midst
Of the wood was a tree, and a woman
By the tree, and a serpent ; and Joseph
Covered his eyes, for he knew the vision ;
And after this, he saw another woman,
And her countenance was as the countenance
Of Mary, his spouse, and the woman looked
Upward to the heavens and the heavens
Shone upon her, and her garments were white,
More than the snow, and she stood with her foot
Upon the serpent—and he heard singing—
His eyes closed, he listened to the singing.
Mary was singing to her Babe as she warmed
It by the fire at midnight. And, afterward,
He added fuel, and when th' fuel had burned,
Again he looked in the flame and discerned
As it were a river, and upon the banks
Were a multitude, and one baptized—a Dove
Descending upon Him who was baptized.
Again he looked and the crowd were lepers,
And the sick, and such as were impotent ;
And He, whose countenance was beautiful, stood,
And they pressed who might touch His garments,
And they who had touched leaped. Again was
The vision changed ; One was beaten with rods ;
And he saw soldiers casting for garments ;
And in the midst of the fire a mountain

With crosses upon it, and this same Man
Hung upon one of the crosses. Joseph
Groaned and awoke from the vision and wept
By the fire—and fell into a deep sleep
Until the morning.

Mary, having warmed
Her Babe and suckled it, laid it in the crib
And knelt by the side of the crib to see It sleep :

Joseph asleep, seated on a low stool
By the smouldering coals—Mary asleep
At the feet of the Babe ; beautiful sleepers !
How sweet Mary must have slept with Jesus
At her breast, or at His feet—at the foot
Of His crib. O, Bethlehem ! thou wert a land
Of pleasantness. Thou wert a very world
Of joy to Saint Joseph ! Blessed Joseph !
He would not have exchanged Bethlehem
For Heaven. He had God, Mary and poverty
And th' Angels. What more could St. Joseph want ?

And Mary and Joseph wanted not food,
All the days that they remained in the cave,
Whether angels ministered to them now—
Bland, reverent celestials, coming in
Bearing in heavenly dishes in their hands—
A little golden tray heaped with th' delicacies
Of Paradise, or whether the people
Who visited them brought unto them food,
In all provided for by angels, or men,
Poor were Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem,

But cared for, dear family of the Lord !
And all that was brought was acceptable.

“Never can a gift too costly,
Touch the manger's humble shrine,
Never can a gift too lowly,
Jesus, touch that throne of thine.”—*Ave Maria.*

ANNO DOMINI.

“The Holy Childhood takes the year,
The lovely, tender year within its fold.”

(Morning of the circumcision—the gray of the dawn in the cave—“Mary holding the Babe of the Universe on her knee.”)

‘COME so soon!’ Poor heart! has the short octave
In which with Joseph she has had the Babe
Of the Precious Blood so soon gone? Has
The crimson day so soon come? “She looks
Into His Face”—where Mary always looked
When in doubt—“a look meets her eyes that sends
The blood in a sweet shiver to her heart.”
“There is a red spot upon either cheek
Of the Babe.” “In the almost transparent vase
Of the Infant Body, her eyes have traced
Its veins” before. “She has felt its pulses
With awe as this Child has lain upon her breast
At night to nurse.” She has divined the meanings
Of that Blood. “With her only a week
And impatient;” “Seven days without giving
One saving drop.” O, loving, restive Blood!
That yearns to let itself be led a victim

As soon as it is born—"from the first, full
Of th' law-loving instinct of God's magnificence."
The red deepens in the two white cheeks;
The Child could not rest in the Bosom
Of His Father, "how then can he rest now
In His Mother's arms?" Th' sins groan for it. Let
It make the offering. Then it will rest.
Then it will rest for a time. "Its rest is
In shedding its blood."

Meantime Joseph stands
In the little shed, or porch, before the cave,
And prays for strength—for strength to be a Priest
Of the Precious Blood. The Divine Infant
Must be circumcised to-day and it devolves
Upon him, and he never could have done
It, only with the awe of his office,
The solemnity and beauty of the stupendous
And perfect sacrifice to be offered,
Came over him. By the communication
Of God he grew to his office. Behold
Saint Joseph, how majestically he enters
The cavern-chamber—no sound! He approaches
To Mary and the dear Babe with emotion,
But with sacrificial control. Mary,
For the first time, shudders as Joseph draws near
To them, and Joseph sees Mary shudder.
He who does God's work cannot falter.
"She feels almost an aversion for Joseph,
That he can do it." "Joseph sees it all."
What a pain it is to him to wound Mary,
"What a sweet look of pity he sheds
On her and on the Infant." The Infant

Looks into his eyes and into the eyes
Of His Mother. Mary arises and lays
Her Babe into the arms of Joseph; he goes
From the cavern grandly. He is the Priest
Of Jesus Christ now and makes a majestic one.
God alway chooses well for his Belovéd.
While Joseph is going out Mary kneels
Upon the spot where she saw Him first
Upon the floor, the night that he was born.

Joseph, having come without to a place
That resembled an altar among the rocks
Where he prayed, proceeded courageously to unswathe
The Child, when again he faltered, looking
In the sweet face of the young child was unnerved—
Almost unnerved—knowing what Child It was:
Before that he could proceed, yet questioned
With the Child and thus himself strengthened:
‘Can I wound thee? Thee, Messiah-Babe, gazing
So gravely on me?’ ‘Can I live and see the blood
Of my God on this barbarous knife?’ ‘Thou knowest
How I would not and forgive Thy own command.
The eyes of the Babe encourage.’ ‘I do,’
Said Joseph; ‘what am I, that I should judge,
Or discern between the Lord and His law?’
‘I do and adore.’ I offer my pain
And my compassion, Lord, and obey.’
Many angels prostrated behind Saint Joseph.
So was the Son of the Eternal Father
Circumcised: So was the Sweet Blood begun
To be shed that is to buy the world back;

So was our Saint Joseph the first great Priest
Of the Precious Blood.

August Saint Joseph,
How honorable, awful, and efficacious
And fatherly that priestly hand from hence :
“ *I have never invoked Saint Joseph in vain.*” *
The name it was given as the Blood flowed.
Mary had refrained from pronouncing the name
From a custom in Israel, or her spouse
Had been promised this grace by the angel :
“ *Thou shalt call His name Jesus.*” How Joseph
Must have pronounced this adorable name !
Could we have heard him and then the angels !
St. Michael pronounced it after Joseph,
St. Gabriel caught it up from St. Michael,
St. Raphael, the next angel and the next,
Standing in a line as stars reaching Heaven,
All the angels shining on Jacob’s ladder
Said and repeated it—the next and the next,
That sweet human name of God, flashing up
Through the distances of Paradise
From one warden to another, till to the Feet
Of the Eternal Father, rose and rested
That one ever-radiant, glowing name—JESUS.

And th’ Babe was borne to His mother, whose tears
Flowed in unison with the first shedding
Of that Precious Blood—Joseph was weeping,
And “the Babe wept for content”—strange, sweet Infant—
With delightful sweetness for the souls washed.

* St. Teresa.

It was the first time and the last, moreover, —
That Saint Joseph ever performed this rite.
He was the priest just for the circumcision
Of Jesus Christ. “It was his Calvary.”

“Long years have passed since that cruel new year’s day of the Babe of Bethlehem, but it begins each year for us now. It is our new year’s day. It braids upon the front of every coming year of life the name of Jesus, our life’s dear Lord, and it braids it in those red snow-drops of the Precious Blood.”—*Faber.*

ST. JOSEPH, PATTERN OF SILENCE AND RESIGNATION, PRAY
FOR US.

Jesus.



AND that same day the Babe was circumcised
Joseph went up to the city to enroll
Their names : and when he who took the census
Made question could he write, ‘So was I taught,’

Joseph having answered, ‘Why,’ said the man,
‘Writest thou not?’ for Joseph only leaned
Over the parchment in a perplexity :
Then Joseph to himself did violence,
And wrote his name, Joseph, son of Jacob,
A carpenter—his years ; th’ name of his spouse
And her age, and then the name of Jesus
And His age. Joseph had hesitated,
Because it was a great humility
For him to write his name before Jesus
And before Mary, and so he must write
As other men, being the head of a family.

He felt a very sweet thrill when he wrote
The very fair and precious name of Mary,
But when he had written the name of JESUS,
He brooded over it. O what thousands
And thousands of times it will be written
And brooded over! It was the first time,
Also, the name of Jesus had been written.
It was one of the honors of Saint Joseph
To write it first. Even as it had been
To name Jesus, and there has never been
A heart that burned toward the name as the heart
Of Joseph, after that of the dear Mother.
See how he bends over it! Our Father
And our Great Saint, well may he, to the name
That was, that is, that shall be—every knee
To bow in the heavens and upon earth—
In the hell beneath. And just before—
Walking as a white acolyte to God—
That other, shining as the moon, white name,
Just before Jesus—and she is thy spouse,
The sweet Mother of Jesus, and thy name stands.
Only one from God, leading that great group.
“The three names in the world have been written
As subjects or planets of obedience:”
The Star, the Moon, the Sun.

The man who keeps

The roll of the names looks over to see
What it is that Joseph is looking upon,
And he, attracted, though he knows not why
By that name, he, too, over it, lingers—
And he looked on it afterwards many times
And it always shone upon the parchment.

THE FORTY DAYS IN THE CAVE COMPLETED.

MARY fulfils her month within the cave.
O, Bethlehem! O, cave! O, manger-month!
Now she watches at night her Infant sleep,
Almighty God sleep! Now she sleeps so sweet,
And often as she awakes makes acts of love,
And omits not to arise and pray at midnight
By the crib, because He was born at that hour;
And when the morning looks into the cave
To see *Him*, kisses His sweet Feet and asks
To serve Him. See Mary kissing the Feet
Of the little Jesus—bathing the Child
In the bowl of fresh water Joseph brings
From the well of the city—or she wraps
Him now in the swaddling clothes and suckles
Him at her virgin-breast. See Mary's eyes
On her Babe. Nay, the scene is too holy!
It is too beautiful to see Mary nurse
Jesus: too sacred! Giving God sustenance—
Or the dear Infant Person of the Word
Of her own immaculate mother-nectar—
Suckling the Infant of Days:

Then gives the Babe
To Joseph while she spreads their simple meal
Upon the rock. Bland Joseph, fondling Jesus,
Finding a sweeter feast even than the meal
Mary's hand spread; than even his, perhaps,
Angel-brought-in breakfast. Serene Joseph,

Does he require other breakfast? hardly.
Is it not a sufficiency—this feast
With Jesus? As saints receiving the Host,
Turn from the meats of earth, sweeter filled,—
“ If any man eat, he shall not hunger ”—
As that feast, robbing all fasting, giving
Bread that is from Heaven. It was as a saint
“ Receiving ”—Saint Joseph holding Jesus,
While Mary placed the biscuits and pitcher
Of water upon th’ rock that was their table.
Then, through the day which followed serenely,
Joseph received such as came to visit
Them, and accepted their offerings in the name
Of the Child: and the melody of angels
Was heard oft-times; and Mary many times
In the day, bowed down before th’ little crib
Where she laid Jesus to adore Him—Joseph
In his reverence, knelt a little distant:
And these days in the cave were precious:
So was the Heart of the Son-of-Man-Babe
First consoled on the earth:

Or when He lay
Upon Mary’s lap and she overleaned,
And Joseph knelt by in an ecstasy,
That was beautiful. Mary would talk low
To Jesus—every word an exuberance
So tremulous—no seraph spoke so sweet,
Th’ eyes of the Babe would beam and her heart thrill.
And Mary would sing in the evening low
And sweet to the Babe—sweeter than the angels
Could sing. Joseph in his own soft rapture
Would sit in the door of the cave at twilight

And hearken her sing; and Mary always sang
 Her Babe to sleep with "*Peace on earth to men
 Of good will!*" and the *magnificat*
 Was the angelus of Mary in those days.



FROM BETHLEHEM TO JERUSALEM.

THE forty days accomplished in the cave
 And Joseph having thanked God for all
 That which had come to pass therein and prayed
 For a blessing on their journey, behold
 Mary coming forth bearing our Saviour,
 Accompanied by Joseph, leading the ass.
 Behold Mary coming forth with Jesus,
 Emerging from her room in the rocks—
 Fair as the moon—ruddy as morn—ruddy
 For the glow in her face—the beautiful glow
 Basking in the Face of Jesus.

They come,

Princes of angels prostrate either side:
Ave Miria, blessed among women!
 "*Stella Matutina, ora pro nobis!*"
 Thou comest forth bearing sweet Salvation
 In thy gracious arms, O, Virgin Mary!
 Welcome! A sweet welcome to the world, Mary:
 Meanwhile, Mary mounts happy Assinus.
 O, Assinus! thou hast been so proud bearing
 The princess, how canst thou step proud enough,
 Bearing the Queen and her beautiful Infant?
 Three angels dimly discerned in the glow
 Of the dawn go on before the travelers.

Mary draws the veil over her own brow
And over th' brow of the Babe that "like a lily
Of marvelous beauty," lies upon her arm,
"As if she feared to let the world see
She had Him."

Joseph observes all the sweetness
Of the new morning. The sweet mother has eyes
Only for the Babe; and all Joseph saw
Touched not his heart like Mary and the Child;
His eyes worshipped Mary with her Babe,
Riding on the white ass. They are making
Such a marvelous journey—from the cave
To the temple, from th' manger to th' altar.
They went on through the freshly verdant fields
And pleasant hamlets—they converse not now.
Words could not augment their joy. Jesus makes
Their conversation interiorly and content.
See the charm of silence in this sweet journey:
How can they talk who have Jesus in their arms!
All of their journeys have been heavenly:
None like this before. Jesus is making
His first visible journey with His parents

Mary sees Joseph yearns to help bear th' Babe:
She, too, divides this supreme privilege—
This transcendent care; she places Jesus
In his arms, delighted to see how her spouse
Loves Jesus. How he folds Him to his breast;
How puts his arms around Him. Was ever babe
By its father so adoringly folded?
How he looks down in His face! How the Babe
Cuddles down His head against his breast!

The roofs of the Holy City are in sight—
The glorious temple crowning Moriah
Where Mary had spent twelve years of her life.
To that beautiful house of her almahood,
She is coming back in all the first snows
Of her purity, back to it still a virgin,
Yet mystery of grace, a mother with a child.
O, how blest! to keep her virginity
And be a mother too!—A mother too!

For Joseph, Jerusalem held the Temple—
And in the temple they had been married:
Come to the place—it was a little way
From the gates, where the women had sprinkled
The garments of Mary with the essence
Of roses as she came out from the city
After her marriage—Joseph comprehends
It all now—It was for this. How lucid
Are God's ways when looked back upon—
How lucid to thee, Joseph.

And, *Jesus*,

Let all my heart draw to Him, for the first time
Entering that Jerusalem that is so dear
To Him. O, Omnipotent Babe! Shall not
The whole city rise up to meet Thee? Shall
They not look in the Face of thy Babe and know
O, magnificent mother! thy secret? Mary
Divines not, it seems, for her modesty
Takes no alarm. She moves as quietly on.
O, Jerusalem! are not thy streets blind!
Th' young King of angels, thousands of angels
And that young mother whiter than the angels,

And that man with face as an angel of the Lord,
No one mistrusting anything is occurring;
They so marvelously content withal;
“It is only we who feel it is not right,”
“Who would see all the city at their feet.”
Princess of Purity, bearing the Sovereign Babe
In thy arms—Queen of Humility, bearing
The Imperial Child, hasten up to th’ temple!
They will know thee there.

That imperial maiden,
Bearing the Sacred Child, comes. They cross
The square before the temple. They kiss the bars
Of the gate. They pray in the holy porches.
Go in sweet Mary—violet Virgin!
The Messiah-Babe within thy bosom,
Humility glorified! She goes gravely in,
Her heart falling lower than the shadow
Of her brow on th’ golden pavement; feeling
How unworthy she is to bring home the Son
Of Almighty God to His Father’s House.
She goes in greatly glorified, but with a meekness
Surpassing the humblest maiden in all Israel.
They go on through many rooms unobserved—
Silently soul, follow over the golden floors—God.

PRAYER—Prepare us, O Lord, to be present at the Blessed Virgin’s and St. Joseph’s Presentation of Jesus Christ.





Presentation of Jesus.



HE comes, her beauteous feet who bears
Up to the Golden Rooms,
The loveliest offering and crown
Of all sweet human blooms.

He leads to sacrifice who knows
What priceless Gift he brings,
Unto His house, what altar to,
What little King of kings.

O, proudest triumph! Joseph hath
The earth's desire brought home,
The Son unto His lovely courts—
The dear old Temple-dome!

And even now to meet him comes
Within yon sacred door
A grand saint by the spirit drawn
His dear Babe to adore.

O, loveliest of mysteries!
The young Eternal charms
Of Paradise infolded in
Those poor, old, withered arms!

How fondly they embrace—those arms—
That darling Babe of Grace!
How beams that wrinkled face above
That little blessed Face!

And closing now his burning eyes,
A song, Saint Simeon sings,
So sweet, 'tis as the Spirit's spell
Of all dear heavenly things:

“*Nunc Dimittas!*” Sweet old Saint!
For thou hast touched the crown!
Enough! thy silver song shall sail
The hoary ages down.

Saint Joseph rapt to ecstasy,
By holy Simeon stands,
And Zachary comes to see—
A mystery understands;

Watches the beaming mother fall
At radiant Simeon's feet,
Watches Saint Joseph kneel beside—
The old man's face so sweet!

Watches each gesture of the Saint,—
The Three—the Babe—and hears
The dazzling airs cleft by a sword
And Mary's sudden tears.

Hears spiritually the tears
That silent fall and cease;—
The Babe looks in His mother's eyes,
The room is dight in peace.

It is a sanctity that's sharp,
And grand as sharp, O Queen,
A cleaving one, but still no moan,
Such peace was never seen.

By Simeon she stricken stands,
In Jesus' Face, His dole,
She sees a vision of her dolours first
Indented in her soul.

His grave eyes look it into her,
His Eyes engrave it there :
Saint Simeon is silent now,
And Mary ne'er more fair ;

And matron Anna nears to kiss
Beloved Mary's cheek,
The sweet revealment in her prayers,
Her precious hope to speak.

The Priest, the Saint lead on to keep
The ancient law's behest,
And Mary with the Victim Babe
On her ensanguined breast.

The little unknown Master has come into the courts of His glorious temple, but not to take possession. "There is a thicker veil of humiliations around Him than that which shrouds the Holy of Holies." "The Incarnate Word, whom the silent angels of the temple are worshipping as He approaches his presentation," comes not as a ruler, but as a victim. "The true High Priest," but no one of the Levites, no one of the many priests, no one but Simeon, Anna and Zachary penetrate Mary's secret, and Joseph who had been before instructed of the angel, and who "fitted into the mystery as Mary's and Jesus' pro-

terior." The windows of His house full of angels, Mary made an offering such as had never been made before since the world began.

"The mother's heart shines through . . . as if its light were magnified by that other radiance through which it shines . . . The will . . . is present, it is unquenchable, its pathos is immutable, but . . . subject with the most . . . meritorious subjection, seen through the transparent will of God, which never oppresses the glories it overrules." Mary is giving away her Child. "In His eyes which look so many volumes, in each single glance we read His perfect knowledge . . . His mother is lifting Him . . . as into the mouth of a devouring fire, but His soul is on fire already with the promptitude of His own human will, and it almost out-glories the flames of the furnace of that Eternal will which is opening to receive its victim." "Love yearns more to be sacrificed" for its poor world "than justice to consume the sacrifice."—FABER.



GOING HOME WITH JESUS.

ANNA would have detained Mary for a feast
 Of true joy with the mistresses and almahs,
 As the sweet custom when an almah brought
 Her first born to present in the temple,
 But how could Mary feast "with that sharp sword
 Of the Holy Ghost in her heart?" "There is a wound
 In her heart that cannot heal" She will go back
 With Him "and let it bleed all her life."

*(Joseph bringing Mary and Jesus through the Gate
 of Damascus)*

O, Joseph! with what a lift of the heart,
 Thou didst come in at this gate this morning,
 Bringing in with thee the mother and Child;
 Thou goest out with what anxiety and forboding,
 Stealing a glance now at the face of Mary,—
 O, how beautiful! in her first dolor—

Pressed close to the heart pondering all these things,
The dear Divine Babe hid in her bosom.
Joseph could not hear sorrow foretold
To Mary and Jesus and not suffer.
He walks sorrowfully calm, in the eclipse
Of Mary's woe, fitly; his heart bleeding
For both. He had looked upon Bethlehem,
Had shared it with Mary and was bringing
His Creator into His House; and just as
He was bringing Him in—in his triumph—
In the grandest act of his office—
The very act of presenting Messiah
Upon the altars of Israel, how had God
Met him! He stood with Mary and Jesus
Suddenly stricken; but he looked upon Mary
And was instructed by her fortitude.
Jesus has grown a thousand-fold dearer
Since the morning, he but wants to gather
Him to his breast; in some tangible way
This foster father wants to protect his Child.
But if He has grown so precious to Joseph
In these few last hours, what must He have grown
To Mary? "What a sweet accumulation
Of tenderness must have been shed in her soul."
Can she consent that another bear her Babe
To-day? Without the loss of a moment
She gives Him to Joseph. She was never—
Never could be for a moment selfish—
Never unready for a sacrifice;
Mary always loves to bestow Jesus
Upon others; "to have others desire
Jesus is the delight of Mary's heart."

She from her arms will give Him—give Him to all
Who of her ask. Give us often Jesus,
Sweet mother! often under His white vails,
Sweetest Jesus! unto our inmost heart!
“Those vails the color of the swathing-bands”
In which His mother used to wrap Him.

Mary loves to see Jesus love others.
See, she has given Jesus to Joseph.
He has not before presumed to ask—save
With his eyes. He has spoken now and asked.
It is sorrow makes love bold and beautiful—
The woe impending for Jesus brings out
Our pitiful hearted Saint Joseph bravely.
He holds out his strong and paternal arms
And the dear, little, Divine One lies mute
Upon his breast. Saint Joseph bends his head
Toward Him and moves on his way absorbed.

Mary and Joseph are arriving at home.
Since she left her little house upon the hill
In the winter, how much has transpired:
But there it stands as simple as ever.

While yet a great way off Eleazer saw
Them and ran to meet them and bowed down
Unto the ground thrice, as he came, and kissed
Th' feet of Mary and Joseph; and Mary
Uncovered the Babe and showed Him to Eleazer;
And Eleazer kissed the feet of the Infant,
And his heart was filled with a torrent
Of happiness; and he implored Mary
That he might bear Him the rest of the way

Up to her house, and Mary so suffered,
And he rejoiced over the Babe greatly.

And Mary, having come into her house,
All of the women of the hamlet came
To welcome her back and to wish her joy
For th' birth of a Son. Let us contemplate
These women wishing Mary joy for the birth
Of Jesus—knowing not their young Saviour;
But having come to see Mary and Jesus,
Were filled with peace and an interior joy,
Insomuch that they could not comprehend
It. But they brought fishes and loaves,
Remembering Mary had come from a journey
With a young child and that she had no maid;
For Huldah, handmaid of Anna, who had been,
Was married at this time and lived in th' home
Of her husband, and Mary and Joseph
Had no servant left but old Elcazer.

And Salome and the other women
That visited Mary delighted to caress
The Babe, and the Holy Infant seemed
Pleased with the kindness of these poor women:
And Mary enjoyed this admiration
Of her poor neighbors and thought how He came,
As they gazed on Him, to save their souls.

“ Joy returns, but still the sword
Near her heart its watch must keep;
Woes within its purpose stored
Are not stifled, only sleep.”

“ ST. JOSEPH, WHOM THE LORD MADE MASTER OF HIS HOUSE
AND RULER OF HIS POSSESSIONS, PRAY FOR US.”

A FAMILY VISIT AT NAZARETH.

AND when Jesus' reputed grandfather
A Heard of His birth, he said to Cleophas,
Prepare now three asses, one for me, one
For thy mother, and one for Mary thy wife,
We will go up and see Joseph, our son,
Before we die; and thou shalt accompany
Us, too, and go up to see thy brother.

Soba, also, sister of Joseph, went
With them, who went up drawn only to see
Her brother, and by coming unto Joseph
Found Jesus and Mary. Beautiful had
This affection always been—the friendship
Of Joseph for this sister and of this sister
For Joseph. The love between a brother
And sister may be a beautiful thing.

Joseph saw his parents and went down the hill
To meet them and welcome them as Saint Joseph
Would welcome a father and mother and lead
Them as Saint Joseph would lead them in where
Mary and the Child were.

Mary hearing
A joyful sound of voices outside, looked
Through the lattice and saw the company:
And seeing a very venerable old man
And woman and the face of Joseph beaming,
She divined and went forth upon th' threshold
And met them as the Blessed Virgin would meet

The patriarchal father and sweet mother
Of her benignant spouse.

Behold Jacob

And Susannah, who are very old, drawn
By an inward illumination, knelt
At the Feet of the young Child in the arms
Of His mother: and they adored the Babe;
And Mary raised them up and embraced
Them; and then she proceeded to speak
To Soba, who stood yet upon the plat
Before the door of th' little house, holding
Both of the hands of Joseph, her brother—
And to Cleophas, the brother of her spouse
And his wife, Mary, who brought also
With her a young child of a year and a month,
At that time, which she put upon the ground
When she saw Mary coming out to meet
Them: and Mary sat her Babe on the earth
When she hastened to embrace her kinfolk;
And while they yet conversed before the door,
The young child of Mary Cleophas, crept
To where the Babe Jesus was on the turf;
And th' Babe Jesus looked upon th' other Babe,
And th' other Babe with a cry of delight,
Crept up to the Babe Jesus and said
With a sweet voice as a bird, '*My brother!*'
And then laid his head down in the lap
Of the Blessed Babe Jesus, and gazed up
Into His beautiful Face; and then Jesus
Knew he would be one of His disciples.
The name of the child that lay in the lap
Of Jesus was James. The Holy Virgin,

Saint Joseph and the parents of James saw
The two young children together and were filled
With much admiration; and the parents
Of James testified to Mary and Joseph,
That the child had never before spoken.
Mary, the mother of Jesus, spake not,
But looked upon the babes, as did Joseph;
And the two had affection for each other
Above that of other children from this time:
And the Blessed Virgin and Mary Cleophas,
Who had never before met, from this hour
Loved each other, also, more than sisters.

After three days, Cleophas and his wife
And Soba, who left her husband at home
And her children, returned to their own homes;
But said Jacob, I and my wife are old
And we may never come again, we will come
When we have staid for a time with Joseph.

Jacob took great delight in this visit;
And he questioned Mary as he was alone
With her and the Child about the shepherds
And the angels that the shepherds heard sing;
And he hung upon her words and the heart
Of th' old man clave to his daughter-in-law,
And he worshipped her almost as the Child;
For he could comprehend her better—
A little—and it pleased the Holy Infant,
Who saw his devotion for His mother:
And the piety of Jacob ripened much
Every day that he staid with Mary—grew

Bright as tender, perennial old patriarch !
More human than Joseph, but admirable—
Saint Joseph's old father ; and he believed
In Mary and in the dear young Child. Let
Us consider Jacob sitting by Mary,
Contemplating the Babe upon her lap
And requesting Mary to lay the Babe
Within his arms ; Mary laying Jesus
In his arms and a spiritual brightness
Coming into his soul, it being revealed
To him that this Child is the Messiah.

And while Jacob spake more with Mary,
And held the Child, Susannah, dear mother,
Leaned toward Joseph, and inquired regarding
The rod she heard blossomed at his marriage ;
She, too, admired his spouse, the holy daughter
Of Anna, the sweet wife of her dear son
And the mother of that lovely Infant ;
But Susannah was consoled by seeing
Saint Joseph, her son, and was enlightened
The more that she saw of his holiness.

The parents of Joseph sleep for the last time
Beneath the holy roof of Nazareth ;
Susannah beholds Joseph in her dream,
Jesus in his arms, then Mary standing
By Saint Joseph, regarding both the Babe
And her spouse, and is awakened by Jacob
Murmuring of a star—" *A Star shall arise
In Jacob.*"—Seeing in his sleep the line
Of a caravan.

The tents are in the sands :
The moon has gone down in the desert :
The cloth of the tent, the sand around illumined :
The Star burning in th' still air over th' tent :
The kings sleep upon an orient mat
Spread upon th' ground, and the tent is open
To the night. "It is summer and the dews
Are sweet." We see by the light of the Star
Their crowns, the gleam of the jeweled garments,
The gleam of scimitars against the wall—
The king's spear—th' gravity and peacefulness
Of their faces—coming to the Christ

Saint Joseph sleeps on a mat at the door
Of the chamber of his aged parents,
Who will never come to see him again.
Thou art amiable, O Saint Joseph !
'Where is my little Lord and His mother ?'
My little Lord is in His mother's chamber,
In the "nursery of the little King of kings,"
In the little chamber within the rock,
In the divine room of the Incarnation ;
Here the Holy Child takes His seeming rest,
While even now that little King watches
The white tent cloths of the desert—His Star
Burning over—watches His kings coming.

It was a lovely morning to commence
A journey. Jacob having staid many days,
Arose to depart : and he blessed Joseph,
His son, and Mary, his spouse, and the Child.
See Jesus in the arms of His mother

As Mary kneels at the feet of Jacob,
 Her father-in-law. Behold the Creator
 At the feet of His creature! The Creator
 Being blessed by a creature!

And Susannah
 Kissed Mary and the Child, and they departed;
 And Joseph accompanied them a part
 Of the way, and when he could go no farther
 The parents of Joseph fell upon his neck
 And kissed him, and said, 'Thou art our first-born;
 The Lord bless thee all days!' And they could not
 Say more for weeping, but kissed him, yet thrice,
 And turned their faces toward Galilee:
 The last time Saint Joseph saw his parents
 In this world. He stood and prayed for them till
 He saw them from sight, and then hastened back
 T' Mary and th' Child, he would not leave alone
 At th' night-time; but Eleazer, faithful servant,
 Accompanied them the rest of the way.



KING-DAY.

SAINT JOSEPH prunes to day
 The old pomegranate trees,
 And looking down the Hill,
 A caravan, he sees.

A royal caravan it seems:
 He wondering stands to gaze:
 They press right up the Hill!
 His hand Saint Joseph stays.

A lengthened caravan!
The rear is in the plain;
They on the dromedaries ride
As men who're born to reign.

The tree, half-pruned, is left,
Astoniéd, great, complete,
Saint Joseph hastens in
To tell at Jesus' feet.

The Babe is just asleep
On Mary's lovely arm;
The cot is still, the air,
Touched with the dearest charm.

'They come! they come! the kings!'
'Arabia's princes ride;'
Sighs Mary, low, 'the Lord
Is good! His will betide!'

What aileth thee, O, child,
And daughter grand of kings!
The touch of human fear,
The kingly coming brings?

Or that late prophecy?
But soft! a cloud of peace—
A tender halo round—
Her very heart-beats cease.

She folds a little now
More close her Babe, and sings
Magnificat They hear,
Those happy, nearing kings.

The feet of kings are on
The little Nazareth floor—
The knees of kings are bent,
The King-Babe to adore—

Uncrowned—prostrate—
Swept to the very floor,
Or as the lofty bow—
As kings know to adore.

They kiss His precious robe,
They kiss His precious feet,
They look upon His face,
In sleep so mystic sweet.

From out His human sleep,
The God-Babe lifts His eyes,
And evermore on heart—
And limb, His capture lies.

He gravely lifts—the Babe—
The Blessed Babe! His eyes,
Their hearts are taken with
A dear, divine surprise.

The sacks of spices lie;
The little pot of myrrh—
To Mary for her Son—
The treasures offered her,

On sainted Anna's floor—
Her pure soul rest most sweet!—
The opened caskets pour
At Mary's sacred feet—

The bag of gold, the box
An Eastern perfume sheds:
The smoke of censers round
Jesus and Mary's heads.

O, happiest kings! to offer first
The incense unto Him,
And in your low, sweet pagan tongues
To sing your worship-hymn.

(Night—by the well of the hamlet below.)

At Nazareth-well that night,
Without the hamlet-gate,
What mean the crowd to draw,
Or rather come to wait?

(A hewer of stone in the mountains just arrived.)

HEWER.

Has any one been drowned
Upon the lake to-day,
Or some tax-eater, new
From Cæsar, lost his way?

FISHERMAN.

So faithful for the master,
Knave, did chip the stone,
You never saw the kings
That through the valley shone?

'You never saw!' You jest!
Or I'm no Nazarene,
But there passed up a show
The bravest ever seen!

2D FISHERMAN.

And in their midst a king—
The Lord our God, befriend !
The camels and the men,
I thought would never end.

1ST FISHERMAN.

Nay, now, I saw it was
A cavalcade of kings,
And every man a king ;
And must on magic wings
Been wafted o'er the sands
Of Araby and Persia ;
The very street they passed
Was perfumed so with cassia.

2D FISHERMAN.

The kings were one ; but one ;
I made the others
Who rode in golden vests
Beside, his brothers.

1ST FISHERMAN.

You made ! their visages !
Ha ! ha !—the swarth—the white !
Their spears of different shape !
Which wore the crown most bright ?

2D FISHERMAN.

Now, Gad, if on thy face,
Thou hadst been proper down,
Thou never wouldst have seen
But one king with a crown.

1ST FISHERMAN.

An' which?—I leave the jest,
In sooth, uncomely here,
While on our honored Hill
The royal tents appear.

2D FISHERMAN.

To-morrow we may look
To see them in the town ;
There's nothing on the Hill ;
Th' city 'll bring them down.

And so they pleasant talked,
As rustic neighbors will,
And strained their eyes upon
The strangely-favored Hill.

And marveled all the eve
Upon the village lawn,
And gave those wondrous kings
Their earliest thoughts at dawn.

Aye, watched the morrow go,
The day that brought not down
From off the honored Hill,
The men that wore the crown.

JESUS GIVING THE KINGS AUDIENCE.

The Hill : Three crowns off-laid
On Mary's lap—just on
The dear Babe's robe of white,
Her eyes, sweet muse upon,—

Drift off, in tender haze—
Wide realms afar she sees—
The first fruit but of thrones,
These kings upon their knees

The king of Araby was old,
As polar flakes his hair,
Of sedate, royal look—
The Persian prince was fair :

The dark king of the Ind—
Euphrates lord—whose glance
Was as his haste—was as
The lightning of his lance.

The number of the kings
That kneel, that mystic three :
St. Joseph meditates
Upon the Trinity.

The pomp of rule—the pride—
The enemy's defeat—
Ah, how these human things
Are faded at His Feet!

What calm, interior lights,
What thoughts from Jesus' breast,
What depths of dovelike peace—
What sweet, imparadising rest.

Three blessed days they sat
At Blessed Jesus' Feet
And every eve and morn
Burned incense sweet.

Three blessed nights their tents
In Nazareth's dear yards, green—
Th' little lawns round Mary's cot—
Their evening tents were seen.

They never might have left,
Those grand, Christ-captured kings,
I think, but as they slept,
They heard an angel's wings.

And in their dreams were shown
Their feet should haste to go,
Nor let the wily Herod
Such Heavenly secret know.

Our kings—they fell once more
Before the mystic Child,
And gathering up their tents
Struck for the desert wild.

The bright beam of the moon
Falls on the parting spear—
While yet, tis evening hour,
The long lines disappear.

“There is something exotic in the beauty of this whole mystery. It reads in St. Matthew like a foreign legend . . . It seems to float over the Sacred Infancy like an unchained cloud, that anchors itself with breathless, sunny calm for a while and then sails off, or melts into the blue.”—FABER.

This visit had been a great help, too, to our Saint. He had all along had such a suppressed desire to see the Child generously acknowledged. The kings had edified him by their magnificence, by the wisdom of their words and more by their wor-

ship of the Child. Their crowns and their offerings at His Feet just suited Joseph. It looked as if the world were coming to Him. It looked so suitable for an Infant God; and they had shown Mary great respect, which delighted Joseph very much. They had also shown him very kind and great respect. But with a holy jealousy of his guardianship, he had staid very close by Mary and the Child. He could hardly tell whether he the more regretted, or was the more relieved, to have the beautiful pageant pass.

(St. Joseph sleeping on a mat before the door of Mary's chamber)

Soft slept the Saviour Child,
On Mary's lovely arm;
The Hill was in the night,
When nature took alarm.

The bird that all night sings
Is mute upon the Hill—
The very stars move slow—
The lowest wind is still;

And Joseph dreamed it rained,—
The rain was blood—a shower
That swept the land: it was
About the midnight hour.

And as he saw, there stood
One by, still he refrained
To ask, and waited from
The Lord, the sign explained.

*“ And the angel of the Lord said, Arise and take the young child
and his mother and flee into Egypt.”*

Saint Joseph knows the voice
Of angel Raphael,
As blessed Mary knows
The face of Gabriel.

And rising up in fear
And in so great dismay,
He girths the ass and bears his spouse
And the dear Babe away.

“ST. JOSEPH, SAVIOUR OF THE SAVIOUR OF MANKIND, PRAY
FOR US!”

The night was dark and tranquil over the little town of Nazareth when Joseph went forth. Mary took up her treasure as He slept and went forth with Joseph . . . Here and there the night winds stirred in the palms; now and then a watch-dog bayed, not because he heard them, but from the mere natural restlessness of animals.” “As Jesus came like a God, He went like a God, unnoticed.”—MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

THE WONDERMENT OF THE NAZARETH-FOLK—CONTINUED.

Three days all Nazareth naught
Could do but watch the Hill,
While hovered o'er the top,
Those white tents pitched and still.

But in the night they passed:
They saw by morning light,
The caravan of kings
Had taken sudden flight.

In wonder, to the Hill,
They hasten to inquire;
Where is the mother and
The Babe—the peaceful sire?

Gone! all is ominous!
Divested stands and still
The little House this morn
Upon the lonely Hill.

And as they trembling search
Throughout the house, the shop—
In on their frightened sight,
The fiends of Herod drop:

Their swords, the blades are red
And brandished still to slay:
The mother and the Babe
Are not at home to-day.'

The simple villagers,
Alarmed with fears confess,
Their beauteous Flower has gone;
Already slain, they guess.

Unless those wandering kings
Have spirited away;
That they were here and gone,
Is all that they can say.

Frightened Salome hides
Within the garden tomb
Her little son, and thus
Evades the bloody doom.

Her tender babe she gives
To holy Anna's care—
The furious soldiers search
All spots—only not there.

They slay and go—seven babes
The bleeding hamlet wails,
Or seven new cherubs sing ;
Sweeter than nightingales.

O, children-saints ye have
The easier guerdon won ;
For sterner martyrdom
Is saved Salome's son.*



BEARING GOD TO A PLACE OF SAFETY.

UNDER the lonesome stars,
Under the glaring sun,
Into the frightful mountains
Glides the pale Virgin on.

Whether by day ~~under~~
The still afternoon sun,†
A wild-bird stirs the bush,
Or the timid rabbits run.

Whether by night the prowl
And stealthy wild beasts tread,
Her heart of woman is
Filled with all human dread.

* James the son of Zebedee, afterward apostle of our Lord.

† A paraphrase from a page of "*Mary at the Foot of the Cross.*"

For men to ignore—to
Deprecate—misapprehend
Jesus, it would have been
A sorrow without end ;

But for them to begin—
And the vision is long—
To hate the hateless Child
And on His track to throng
Like wolves for blood, it is
A sore thorn in her heart—
A life-long thorn and pain,
That may never depart—

Never with life. He has
Done what, but at them look
With His sweet Face? and they
Cannot His sweetness brook ;
And before He can walk
They must make Him to fly.
The truth is they cannot
Bear such sweet goodness by.

She had made up her mind
For such a sacrifice,
Even the beautiful Babe
That in her bosom lies.
She was going to give
Him for them—and she had
Virtually done it now ;
Oh, ingratitude sad !

Oh! why should they pierce
The veils of His clay,
And hunt His dear steps
Like lynxes for prey?
In that Infant scabbard
Of flesh, wondrous sheathing
The glows of God, only
Such sweetness is breathing.

Beautiful! beautiful Child!
Was there ever anything
So hateless and so fair
As the little Saviour King?
Flitting away like a speck
On the wind of the wild,
Out of the sight of His own
And loved so long, sweet Child?

The Desert—a path so trodden by the mystics—
And that rare word-painter, Faber, has been
Along, too, so late, we may not attempt
To depict. Every stunted palm overhanging
Its lone well, every line of thorny shrubs
Over “the dewless sands,” “along the grooves
Filled with stones where no streams run,” has been
So well depicted, that we will select
But a few bits, already sweet-painted
As our mosaics; just to keep in sight
The dear “path of these holy fugitives
Bearing away God to a place of safety.”
The vast lonesomeness, the proud sterility,
The thirsting winds, unclothed desert-scenery,

Nature in her nakedness, where the hand
 Of man was never laid on her mane to tame
 Her wildness—the breath of art never blown,
 May leave a silent picture only in our hearts
 As we press on after the pale mother :

“It is a weary plain which stretches out before us, . . . and tawny as a lion’s hide.”—“Two creatures are flying across this wilderness, invisible satellites far behind, hunting the Creator to His death, but baffled by a woman’s speed, to whose feet a mother’s love, which is also a creature’s worship, has given wings.” . . . “Two creatures had carried the Creator into the wilderness and were taking care of Him there. Sunrise and sunset, the glittering noon and the purple midnight, the round moon and the colored haze, came to them in the desert for many a day, still they traveled on.”

“Under the shadow of a cliff which lies so low that afar off the eye would look over it without suspecting the undulation in which it lies, there is a crystal well, a spring of modest volume, and separate spikes of green stand up like miniature palisades in the sand, and some desert-haunting plants with brittle, fleshy stalks, grow near, and in the cool shade Joseph is resting. The shade of the Eternal Father has grown even yet deeper upon Joseph, and somehow, if we dare to depict it so, the grace of maternity sits more gravely upon Mary’s brow. The Child visibly understands it all, but is mysterious and holds its peace. The bird of prey that is floating over Him like a spot of gold struck by the sunset in the air is as large and seems the more rightful master of the place.”

Is it an eagle over that picture,
 Or angel? That bird always troubles
 Us. Had it not better have been an angel?
 If a bird of prey, what is it there for?

“It is a desolate spot remote from the caravans. It is the dead of night, but . . . the wilderness has many voices. It would puzzle us to know where they come from, but they do come, sad, moaning, inarticulate. Is it the wind grating on the sands? Is it the sobbing of the reedy springs? Is it the clefts of the rocks that make organs for the winds? . . . Or is it the joints of the great world that are creaking in the silent night

like a distant tramp of men walking upon snow? It is a strange lullaby. . . The moon shines down upon the group. All three are sleeping. God is sleeping between His two chosen creatures. Who then is watching in the bright darkness of the upper air? We feel a Watcher to whom our words dare not give any form."

One more penciling from the fair artist
Who never forgot the great Saint Joseph.

"It is bright morning. The day is fairly advanced. The Infant is being changed from Mary's arms to Joseph's. It is but an incident of the journey, yet it is also a mystery. Mary is without her Babe. Joseph is bearing the Babe and has grown now so vivid a shadow of the Eternal Father that he almost startles us into worship. The immense Word filleth the whole Bosom of the Eternal Father. He nestles well in one corner now of Joseph's bosom. Behind him, visible only in uncertain aerial outlines, follows a procession—a pageant of grand and gorgeous apparitions, at which we gaze in breathless awe. It is the historical priesthood of the whole long-enduring Church, up to the last ordination before the day of doom and the young priest who will have but one Mass to say. Popes are there with their meek faces overshadowed by the tiaras, Bishops whose countenances beam with masculine holiness, looks of paternal softness unbending the austere lines of science on their brows. Priests, also, men of manifold gifts, fountains of sacred light sparkling with the strange inventions of self-crucifying charity, hearts large as oceans, men who knew how to multiply their lives a hundred times for souls, the diversity of whose eloquent lineaments, silently speaking as many tongues of love as if they were the sisters of souls rather than their rulers—all of these, with countless pure-faced Levites and youthful ministers, beautiful in boyish chastity, mingling the impulses of a free, graceful artlessness with the self-controlling happiness of a downcast, bashful mien—all these are shadowily following Joseph, as if they were his own shadow variously multiplied, while he bears the Infant in his arms. . . The face of Jesus looks the meaning of it all, but is as silent in His swaddling clothes as the Blessed Sacrament upon the corporeal."

Another desert-pageant—or part—told
By a poet at Notre Dame—our Ind. land
Of Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin—

Our book grows fast; but we must fain have
 This one more legend-illuminating for th' path
 Of this leader of priests. After that line
 Of shadowy priests following Joseph,
 Its vases in the hands of the angels
 Will gleam as sanctuary vessels.

"The noon-day hour: 'beneath a low-bowed palm
 A venerable man stood leaning on
 His pilgrim-staff;' with patriarchal calm
 And love angelic, gazing ardent down,
 His seer-rapt eyes, some trancing vision own.
 Reclining by the tree his children seem:
 A maiden radiant as the glowing sun
 Which flows through palm leaves pure of torrid gleam,
 A Babe, the other, round whose brow haloes beam."

* * * * *

"Save where they rest beneath that friendly palm;
 Nor green plant springs, nor living creature strays,
 On all the vast horizon; breathless calm
 Broods o'er the fervent plain, no breeze, no cooling balm."

* * * * *

"Sleep came gently on
 The aged man, sunk in the grassy sod;
 While as a mother on her only son,
 Yet as a seraph before the living God,
 And still as martyr-saint when falls the rod,
 So on the Babe, the maiden's fair light smiled,
 Then set in slumber."

"The hymn
 Of Heaven's spirits dies, where deep blue tints
 The sky; but now I heard! and yet they swim
 The nether-wave where flash the plumes of seraphim.

The Virgin's eyes scarce oped, then closed again,
 As loth to lose their own sweet vision yet;
 But while the faithful Joseph heard amen
 Responded still where angel-choirs had set
 Their tunes of praise and harp and coronet
 And heavenly plumage gloried on the skies—
 While on the dear ones fell his lashes wet,
 The radiant mother oped her eyes
 Once more and gazed with raptured love upon her prize."

“ ‘ Still with me, darling, still, my darling mine !
 Ah, yes, my Babe, Thy pain, my grief must come ;
 Yet would I not, (forgive, dear Lord, Divine !)
 That Thou hadst gone unto thy Heavenly home
 And left the world a-cold where I must roam
 Too long without Thee.’ — ‘ I have seen,
 Dear spouse, most wondrous vision, joy and gloom
 Relieving ; and the Lord hath given to gleam
 Most hidden knowledge—Lo ! the sign, here God hath been ! ’ ”

Upon the living turf beside them was
 A feast out-spread, unnoted when or whence
 It came ; the cloth, soft, snow-white on the grass
 While ruby vases bearing manna-bread, intense
 Flamed o’er the lint and wines blushed glad through dense
 Rock-crystal ; cool, ripe strawberries heaped in cones
 Their silvery baskets ; creamy pitchers thence
 Took crimson ; sweets were there that orient owns,
 Choice fruits and tankards whence the oozing water runs.

Renewed in body as in spirit erst,
 The Holy Family gave thanks : the Child,
 Sweet-smiling from His mother passed at first
 To Joseph, then to fragrant rose leaves piled
 By lovely angels—once He turned and smiled
 As longing rather her, than rest, or sleep.
 But nature soothed His lids and soft beguiled
 To needful bliss, while Mary and Joseph keep
 Their watch, and love and care and stillness o’er them creep.

R. V. HOWARD—*Ave Maria*, Vol. 11.

And yet, as they were passing another day—
 (*Legend of the strange Hunter* completed*)
 Through a wood extensive and old and full
 Of dens as trees, a hunter crossed their path,—
 A man who might be wild, so strange he seemed—
 His coat of skins—but for his spear, a blade
 That glittered in the sun that straggling shot
 In through the hoary trees as he strode past—
 Mary within her bosom close concealed
 The Babe, and Joseph nearer Mary drew.
 They were alarmed, though nothing followed,

* Orsini’s Life of the Blessed Virgin.

And for days they saw him not again ;
Yet that some one hovered on their path they knew ;
For oft at times was heard a stealthly step,
Th' snapping of a twig, th' rustle of a brake :
Why presses that lone hunter on their track ?
The heart of Mary, timid woman, is afraid.
And Joseph changes often as the step is heard
To walk betwixt the danger and his charge,
While day and night, for Mary and the Child,
He prays.—The creature prays for the Creator,
The dependent for the Omnipotent.
Still followed by that unknown man ; a day
They heard him not, they just began to lose
Their fear when that pursuing step again
Would break upon their watchful ear, until
At length one day, entangled in a wood—
The wood was deep, the track was lost, and long
They wandered in the wilderness, its thread
To find ; the bread, the water in the sack
Was gone ; the ass exhausted sank ; the heart
Of Joseph felt that it must fail ; Mary,
Her white lips for water thirsting, sat pale
And languid on the ground ; and the dear Child
Lay like a smitten flower upon her lap ;
That tread ! Joseph can only now commit
His treasures unto God and pray, while stalks
From the depths of the wood, that same strange man ;
Draws on and hesitates,—again draws on :
Saint Joseph makes an offering of his life
To God ; but prays for clemency for Mary
And the Child ; when to his joy he perceives
Th' man bears but a cup of water in his hand,

And has knelt where Mary sits desolate
Upon the ground to proffer her the cup ;
A smile glorifies her pale lips ; but first
She bends above the fainting Child to give
Him drink, and the Babe, grave, while very sweet,
Lifts His eyes upon the man who had brought
The cup of water unto His mother
And Him, before he tastes ; and the man bowed
Unto the ground when the Babe looked
Upon him, and Mary smiled as Mary
Only could smile ; and th' Child having revived,
She tasted the cup while Joseph looked on
And said in his heart, I have wronged the man,
And he may be an angel ; angels used
To appear unto the patriarchs as men ;
And while he yet wondered, the strange man brought
Water also unto him, and he drank ;
And then the man whose face they did not see,
For he was disguised, which, too, made Joseph
Esteem him to be an angel, opened
A bag that he bore about his girdle
And laid before them dried berries and bread ;
Such as he had, and when they were refreshed
He guided them from out the wilderness,
And went before and lead them through Egypt
To a city where the Jews had a colony.
And all the time the man showed not his face ;
And neither had he spoken, but he furnished
Bread and led them by the nearest paths
Until they came to the city, when he made
To turn back ; whereupon Joseph offered
Unto him of the treasures which he carried

Upon the white ass—for he had no gold
To proffer the man ; upon the borders
Of Judea he had parted with the gold,
When he would enter the desert and thought
To purchase a beast whereon he might ride.
He had concealed the Mother and the Child
In a little wood that was adjoining,
And ventured to approach toward the city,
No soldiers being seen. Without the gates
There was a watering-place where was traffic :
He thought to buy for himself a beast here ;
But there were gathered impotent folk,
A great number in a crowd, lame and blind
And that had divers ills ; such of the poor
As had no friends and were unprovided :
And when these poor folk saw that Joseph had
A bag such as the rich carried moneys in,
And was a benevolent-looking man,
They gathered around him and clamored
For the gold, and besought him in the name
Of the Messiah whom they expected,
And Joseph gave th' gold. The poor always took
Advantage of Joseph. For his reward
He had to walk all the way to Egypt ;
And I presume the angels accompanying
Thought it a beautiful reward. I presume
That to him to-day in heaven it seems
A beautiful one, too, and that he is grateful
That God did not lessen one step of th' long
And tiresome way. There was yet a casket
Of jewels and the myrrh and the spices
He had left with Mary ; and to return

To our little party, Joseph offered
Of their treasures, to divide, with the man
Who had befriended them ; but th' man,
Of the spices or the jewels would not receive ;
But of the myrrh he took a small bundle
And put it in his bosom, and then he wept
And abruptly departed ; but he went
But a little way, when he turned back.

Mary sat upon a stone by the wayside :
Being, as she thought, alone with Joseph,
Her veil was put back and her tenderness
And beauty, transcending, shone forth. The Child
Lay upon her lap : and the man came back
And prostrated himself and adored th' Child ;
And after he had adored a long time,
He raised his head from the ground and lifted
His eyes upon Mary, and uncovered
His countenance and removed the disguise.
It was Agabus, and his face was worn
And pale as of one who had seen sorrow ;
And he spoke not and there was a tear
In the eye of Mary, though a sweet calm
In her face.

And having adored the Child
And kissed the hem of His blanket and the hem
Of the mantle of Mary and of the mantle
Of Joseph, Agabus departed, and they saw
Him no more, for he returned to the wood
In which they had been lost and abode there ;
Yet knew while they remained in Egypt,
And learned when they returned unto Judea ;
And heard, moreover, after many years,

Of th' preaching of Jesus and his miracles ;
And after that Jesus was erueified,
Sought out His disciples, and believing,
He was baptized by St. James, at that time
Bishop of Jerusalem. No one might love
Mary unrequited ; so was faith given
To Agabus. No one may love Mary,
Even not comprehending her, unrewarded ;
And Mary within the breast of no man,
Ever woke any passion but the love
Of virtue. The countenance of Mary,
Its beauty, never inspired any love,
But the love of holiness, angelic face !
All stood in presence of Mary growing
More chaste ; all went from Mary more pure,
Agabus loved Mary, and he was drawn
To her only among women ; though he knew
Not why, till as he adored at her feet,
It was revealed to him who that Child was.
Ah, Agabus was not thy sole lover,
Sweet mistress of all holy mens' hearts,
Lady of the Priests, Virginal Empress,
Mother of our Lord and sister of mankind,
All thy holy brothers love thee, Mary.
And thy sisters, too, worship thee, Mary,
Beautiful is the love of woman for woman !
' Rare ? ' Yes, perhaps there is not anything
In this world more like the loves of the angels—
" The object of womens praise "—Generations
Bless thee—thy sons and thy daughters—Lady
Of our race, mother, sister, earth's one pearl,
Mary our Mother, our Queen and our Friend.





Egypt.

SAINT JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY UPON THE NILE.

“What are those white walls which are laved by the flood when it is out, but otherwise rise out of that luxuriant green plat of densest herbage sward so inveterate green that it seems proof almost against the scorching of the Egyptian sun? It is Heliopolis.”—BETHLEHEM.



GABUS, having departed, Mary
Suckles her Babe under a tree not far
From the gates: Joseph leans upon his staff
Meditating: ‘This is Egypt.’ ‘There’s th’ Nile,

Lapsing like a dream through this old pagan land.
There are the sandy wilds,’ ‘the rich loam fields,
That the inundation annually renew,’

‘How little they know Almighty God has sent
His Son to them.’ ‘There are the pyramids,
Egypt’s former greatness—her future greatness—
The Babe that rests upon His mother’s knee.’

Mary having finished suckling the Child
Under the tree, pointed out to this day,
Joseph made a prayer at the gate that God
Would prepare the way, and the three went in
Under a tree at the gate, all who entered

Must go in under—and the tree bowed down;
 But Saint Joseph was not astonished
 A tree should bow when thé Infant Jesus
 Honored it so much as to pass under its boughs:
 That same moment th' multitudes in th' streets
 Stood still. It was called an earthquake.
 It was only that Child coming through the gate.

"It is the evening of a pagan holyday and the streets are full of the people. A fearful, dubious rumor has gone forth . . . the multitude sways uncertainly and then rolls onward to the temples in waves and waves of men . . . As the sun was sloping, while the lanterns were just being lit, while the incense was smoking tranquilly before the idols, and the sacred doves were settling themselves to roost in the palm trees of the outer courts, the images of the gods fell without warning from their base with a hideous crash and are lying mutilated and in fragments on the ground."—FABER.

"And the false gods fell down moaning
 Each from off his golden seat—
 All the false gods with a cry
 Rendered up their deity—
 Pan—Pan is dead!"

"And the hoarse, deep-throated ages,
 Laugh your godship into scorn—
 And the poets do disclaim you,
 Or grow colder if they name you,"

"Get to dust as common mortals,
 By a common doom and track,
 Let no Schillar from the portals
 Of that Hades call you back."

"Or instruct us to weep all
 At your antique funeral pall."

"We will weep not . . . earth shall roll
 Heir to each gods aureole."

"Earth outgrows her mystic fancies
Sang beside her in her youth,
And those debonair romances
Sound but dull beside the truth."

"Look up Godward!"

"Pan—Pan is dead!"

"His sole Godhead stands complete."—MRS. BROWNING.

"All the images in the whole land had fallen upon their faces."
ORSINI.

"There was hardly a breath to set a broad plane leaf turning on its little unwieldy pivot. What omen is this? . . . On such a day . . . When every town of Egypt, the ports of the Nile mouth, the dwellers above the cataracts, even the peasants from the distant oasis had gathered in the sanctuary of the sun." . . . "Through streets silent, vacant, in the rear of the multitudes who have rushed to the temples, Mary clasping to her bosom her slumbering Child, follows Joseph faintly and weariedly to the village khan."—FABER.

Now a man observes them, who is a Jew,
And seeing our strangers are Galileans, makes
Them welcome and invites them to his house:
He was from the same province. They follow
The man and go by the idolatrous temples.
Crowds are pressing in where the idols lie,
The people gazing on their demolished gods
In a stupor. Some of these coming out,
Meet now face to face the strange Child. "Strangers
Are no strangers in this Heliopolis,"
"Yet that timid mother and her Child draw
All eyes." "Something more than beauty overflows
The countenance of the Child." "Every one
Looks up and follows them with his look
So long as they are in sight." "The mother
Instinctively folds Him to her bosom,
As if they were going to rob her of Him."

And "when it is truly, and she knows
It is only the fierceness of their admiration
That lights so sharp their swarthy visages."
Now they turn into a street away from the crowds;
Asa, the man, conducting our travelers,
Lead them on through several narrow streets
Of "quaint bazars in an alley of high walls"
In that part of the city where the Jews dwelt;
Then in a dim street "with buildings so tall
The sun only lighted it in its meridian:"
Here was his home; and his wife, named Lydia,
Met them in the first court and saluted
Them. Lydia embraced Mary and taking
Her Babe in her arms, carried Him within
With gladness into her house. She had had
But one child, a little son that had died
Soon after he was circumcised, and her heart
Was tender since toward young children. She laid
Her face to the cheek of the Babe and kissed
It, and made Mary welcome, and hastened
Much to make her very comfortable.
Lydia is preparing supper for these strangers;
Asa and Joseph are conversing in the porch
Of the house, and the Babe lies tranquilly
In Mary's arms. He is just a year old
To-night. Mary is comparing Bethlehem
And Heliopolis—the cave and Asa's house:
The Babe looks steadfastly in her face
And Mary knows that He knows her thoughts
The two faces hold a colloquy: angels,
Two or three, stand unobserved by the lattice:
And in due time from this night Lydia

Had another child born. It was a daughter
And she called its name Mary. She became
A very holy woman, and had the honor
Of being th' first child named for th' Blessed Virgin.

Asa, who was a carpenter, pressed
Joseph much to abide with him; for the heart
Both of the husband and the wifeclave
To these holy strangers, and he offered
Joseph a part of the work that should come
To him. But Joseph, knowing that the man
Was poor, and, as himself, a foreigner,
And that for two work sufficient might not fall
To hand in the same neighborhood, yearning
To dwell, moreover, apart solitarily
With Mary and Jesus, thanked this kind man,
But the day after he came leased a house
For himself. It was but a poor tenement,
But in a retired spot and adjoining,
Or nigh to the temple or the synagogue
Of the Jews—within its alley or rear.
Tradition says this house was conical
Or shaped like a bee-hive, and here Joseph
And Mary dwelt while they lived in Egypt.
The day after they had taken possession
Was th' Sabbath. Joseph and Mary repaired
With joy once more to the synagogue—
“Sweet oasis in that strange, heathen-land!”
Mary carried Jesus in her arms to church.
“Many mothers who saw the new worshippers
Envied that mother her beautiful child.”
Joseph, glad for escapement from Herod,

And from the perils of the wilderness
And the desert, and at all times zealous
For the adornment of God's house, carried
The most precious gems of the casket—pearls
Of price—each ruby “a cup of the sun”—
That Mary had kept, and these, presented,
As a thank-offering for himself and his spouse ;
And all they of the synagogue looked kindly
Upon the new family. Saint Joseph
And the Blessed Virgin adored devoutly
And returned to the little bee-hive house,
Very happy. How could they be otherwise
And have Jesus with them?—saved—that long
And frightful journey of the desert ended.
But when the poor learned Joseph had jewels—
From the present he had made ; it was told ;
For there were not any other precious stones
Like unto in this temple, and the temple
At Heliopolis was adorned very much*
It was not many days before they flocked
To the house where Joseph dwelt, and Joseph
And Mary when they saw their poverty
And their distress, gave unto them meanwhile
Till they had no more jewels remaining.
And when this little family lacked food,
Joseph took of the bundles of the myrrh
And the spices and sold them for as much
As they would bring, that he might provide bread,
And to buy tools with which he might work ;
And when the silver was gone he received

* Josephus.

For the myrrh and for the frankincense—left
Of that which the kings used in their homage;
For they burned much of it before Jesus—
Then Joseph prayed and still sought for work;
And after some days found some that he brought
Home to do: and, he wrought as in Nazareth,
For the daily bread of his dear family;
And such time as he would rest from labor,
Would instruct some of the poorer people,
Among the Egyptians that came to his house.
Like some choice “flower in a new climate,
Giving out new color and new odor;”
Venerable, first apostle of Jesus!
He becomes like a doctor or missionary;
In his piety and great zeal “he converted
Many poor idolaters of the neighborhood.”
We love to think of Saint Joseph’s work
In Egypt. The converts were all enrolled
In the synagogue where Joseph worshiped
And became worshipers of the one true God.

Contemplate Joseph teaching his Egyptians
In a retired corner of his sweet porch.
See those “swarth, earnest faces” gazing up
Into the most benevolent countenance
Of Joseph as he expounds. Then, Mary
Passes by on some domestic errand,
Saint Joseph and his scholars—“every eye
Lights up”—“the very glimpse of Mary’s gown
Passing in and out is a devotion
For these converts.” “When the Child is older,
He has Him with him,” dear foster-father!

While he gives his lessons of piety,
Both to those that had come unto him first
And others, those first converted, brought in.

The Child Jesus is seated on a mat
Beside him upon the ground, or He lies
His head upon the skirt of his father
And sleeps while he gives his lesson to his dear pagans—
That sleeping Child on Saint Joseph's skirt
“A heaven as well to those poor Egyptians
As to Joseph,” “supernatural, royal Flower,”
Hourly giving out some fresh life and beauty—
Fount of loveliness! ineffable Jesus!

And while Joseph instructed these poor men
That came unto him, Mary attended
To her house—to all the family-cares,—
Adored the Child incessantly and found
Time to spin for the Egyptian ladies,
Fine purple threads for their embroideries,
Which she did with such skill it was sought for.

These heathen women that came to Mary
Brought to her offerings sometimes of flowers; *
Some rare flowers, a little pot of sweetmeats,
Or a garment for herself or for the Child.
They would sit and watch the face of the Child,
Such “a grave and tender fascination”
It had for them, “till sometimes its beauty
Was so reverent that it made their hearts
Tremble too much.” But then, that dear “likeness
To Mary's face confused it with earthly things;”

And "just as it was growing too heavenly
Enabled them to repose on its beauty"—
Happy adorers! adoring unconscious.
These women compare the mother and Babe :

"Behold, the little white lily is blooming below the greater one, an off-shoot of its stem and a faithful copy, leaf for leaf, petal for petal, white for white, powdered with the same golden dust, meeting the morning with the same fragrance, which is like none other than their own—God copying His own creature."

Well might these women of Egypt hover
Around these fair exotics, creation had
Never so fair a sight to see before—
God in a cradle—the little babe—God
In the arms of its young human mother ;

And the Child was esteemed, too, a precious pearl
By the Jews among whom His parents dwelt
And who regarded them though they lived
Very secluded. Few of their neighbors
Were familiar, they had so great a respect.

TWILIGHT ON THE BANK OF THE NILE.

"It is the brief evening of Egypt." "The Nile glows like a glossy backed creature, swift, broad-backed and almost noiseless in the crimson sunset. Only at the edge the quick waters make the reeds twitter a little, except in the little earthy bays where the lotus-lily rises and falls at anchor just tremulous enough to shake its odor out upon the air like incense from the thurible. The Incarnate God is musing upon the bank ; Mary withdrawn a stone throw from Him, as if she felt it was His will."—FABER.

"I behold in thee, O God of my soul ! that thou hast no certain abode in this world ; I learn by thy example that thou wouldst not have me fix my heart upon those goods thou givest me." . . .
"If I love thee, O Lord, I shall comprehend the secrets of thy conduct. Thou wilt have man, being a pilgrim on earth, to fly continually . . . and to sanctify his banishment by his patience

and love of thee. Thou, perhaps, desirest also that I should neither be taken up with what I suffer, nor with what thou art to do with me; and that resigned to thy care, I should have no other than to live without any tie to earth, to serve thee faithfully and to suffer myself to be guided in all things by thy providence."—FATHER THOMAS OF JESUS.

Worst spot upon earth, how Jesus pities
Thee and flies to thee!—rotten in idolatries,
Poor people! you have His sweetest young years.

"Why should I not hope in thee, O, my God, when I see thee love sinners so effectually and come to abide with them . . . When I see thee so earnest in doing them good that when they persecute thee . . . Thou retirest not into Heaven where thou hast a peaceful abode and an infinite number of blessed spirits to adore, love and acknowledge thee for what thou art; that thou fliest into Egypt because thou wilt purify by the breath of thy spirit that country corrupted by vice and idolatry that so many holy solitaries who were to come thither after thee and there live in the purity of thy love, might breathe in it the sweet air and odor of virtues which thou hast diffused therein . . . Yes. O Lord, thou art wholly employed about us and our necessities. O, my God, even while thou seemest most at rest and while thou remainest there so quiet and unknown, thou plantest poverty of spirit, slight of honors, contempt of the world, silence, prayer, obedience, purity of heart, desire of heaven, relish of sufferings, holy simplicity, thy life of pure love and angelic chastity in a mortal body."—FATHER THOMAS OF JESUS.

Barbarous but blessed land where develops
The prolific life of the child-Creator
Who cannot refrain from creating still
While He remains with you. Who is preparing
His soil for a future nursery for His Church—
Where He will start plants for His Kingdom
Of foliage and scent, no other garden of th' earth
Might come near to. No earthly colors
Were ever brilliant as the inner peta's
Of the brave flowers that He will grow here.

Land of the hermit's love, where the shy saints
 Have always found poverty they so affect,
 Exile they so cling to—hid holiness—
 "All that th' mystics so love"—Desert of Saints!
 Thy solitary sands, why so alluring?
 So drawing to beautiful souls? My Lord's steps
 In His sweet Childhood walked this way and staid.

"His mind's the Child's opens before us now as if a sanctuary were being unveiled, and it flows out of His eyes that are bent upon the stream. In the scarce audible murmur of the river he hears the cry that rang through Egypt in the night, that terrible night of the firstborn. It is as if the echoes of that wail had been undulating over the desert ever since. The tears gather in His eyes, for He thinks of Bethlehem, its mothers and its innocents."—FABER.

"The voice of the blood which flowed from those little innocent bodies reached Him; and His sacred humanity which saw all things in God, must have felt at the same time, the pain of all the children and that of all their mothers. . . . It is true He was to recompense them abundantly some years after for the death they had undergone for Him by the crown of glory which He would merit for them; but whatever He designed to do and suffer afterwards, did not diminish in Him the sentiment of compassion with which He was penetrated through the natural goodness of His heart."—FATHER THOMAS OF JESUS.

"He hears now in the stillness . . . the tramp of countless hurrying feet . . . the children of Israel going forth in the darkness upon their exodus:"—"there is the exodus of a whole world to be accomplished, and it is He who must cleave the sea and how shall it be cloven? The twilight deepens almost suddenly, it is dark. The eyes of the Child have gone out in the darkness, and the wind arises, and the mist has gathered on the stream. Mary has knelt down and is looking with prescient anxiety into the face of the Child."—FABER.

Joseph comes out and hastens to bring
 Them into the little house upon the bank.

*This same house; one day the angels, leaning
 Over it from the serene zenith, said*

- ‘The Eternal Child stands alone there!’
Mary has suspended her wheel, Joseph
Holds in his hand an adze and piece of wood,
“Their eyes are fixed upon the Child who is
Upon His feet”—upon th’ ground, but “clinging
To the lap of Mary’s dress.” He lets go
The dress. A ray from the open window
Comes and rests on the Head of the Child.
“He stands trembling in the ray of the sunlight
Like a strangely beautiful blossom”—*stands!*
Almighty God a little Child for the first time
Stands upon th’ earth He has created. Look
At th’ eyes of the mother and foster-father!
“An earthquake might rend Heliopolis now,
And they not hear or feel.” Beautiful Child!

Again, it is twilight in the little hive;
Joseph is standing by his carpenter’s bench,
Mary is seated near upon a low stool
That she uses for a chair: her little Son
Is knelt by her lap. Hush! His eyes are raised
And His Hands joined. He is saying a prayer
After His mother, just like any child—
God taught to worship God by a creature!
The Child Jesus saying His night prayer!
“Just like and unlike any other child”—
God’s child. The beautiful glow of ecstasy
Is on Jesus’ face and Mary’s. Joseph
Stands by his work-bench, looking on Mary
And Jesus. Th’ glow is on Joseph’s face, too
Without all things stand in a grey haze.
The little house is filled with a glow.

A very clear and tender effulgence.
Th' ears of the two had heard angelic choirs;
But they heard no such melody as this.
Hush! They are in the still air above,
Listening to the prayer of this little Child
At the knee of the Virgin Mary.
Mary near Jesus is sustained—Joseph,
“It almost calls his soul out of his body.”

There is an olden tradition that Jesus
Made this speech when a year old, to Joseph:

“My father, I am come from Heaven to be the light of the world, and as a good shepherd to seek and to know my sheep, and to give them the food of eternal life. I desire you both may become children of the light, since you are so near its source.”

‘*My father!*’ He called me, said Joseph.
In his heart he had been for a long time
Revolving whether it would be proper
For him to call this Divine Child his Son.

An Egypt noon. Th’ Holy Family rest
Under the shade of the trees in their grounds:
The Holy Child “lies upon His Mother’s lap,
His look turned upward upon her face.”

“The incense of the whole creation is less to Him than the grateful homage of her fragrant love. . . . He nestles in it. . . . His bath is in that clean love. . . It is a jubilee to Him to have a creature whom he can be like.”—BETHLEHEM.

He is dearer to Mary and Mary is dearer
To Him than one year ago. Joseph leans
Upon a carpenter’s reed in his hand:
A year ago! How fatigued he was that day
From toiling over the sands of the desert:

How weary the tender mother and Child.
There has been a whole year of exile,
He has not felt for the joy he has had
With Jesus and Mary. He has saved the Child
A whole year and he smiles—that serene smile
Of Saint Joseph—Jesus observes him now ;
Joseph holds out his arms : the Divine Child
Totters with pretty infantine eagerness,
“As a little beam of light” acrost the sward,
From His mother’s arms to his. He lies now
Upon his breast, supported by his arms ;
He looks upon Saint Joseph ; “ He disports
In his strong arms ; ” in His grave, childish joy,
He sits upon his knee ; He feels with his hand
Of the snowy beard ; “ He looks in his face
With an infantine curiosity.” At times
Not wholly unmingled with awe. We have
So often seen when His look has been fixed
On Joseph. “ No one ever saw so plain
As that Child the shadow of the Father.”
The Child walks now : how holily the eyes
Of Joseph follow the lovely footsteps
Of that little Child on the smooth, worn sod
Of that inveterate green around their house.
The Eternal Child is now two years old.

THE SPRING OF MARY :

A sort of ledge-way and natural spring
In the rocky soil where some low bushes grew—
Which is shown to this day, and the bushes
On which she hung the little robes to dry
In the sun. How precious to our hearts,

And we be Christians, the hill, a little rise
Of land, covered with low, thorny thickets,
Where Mary would come to wash in the morning
In the cool, bubbling spring the swaddling clothes
Of the Infant Jesus and hang them to dry;
And when He was grown and a little boy—
Th' little boy-God—th' little tunics of Jesus,
Always made of th' snowiest linens, never soiled,
Yet Mary would wash them because mothers
Washed for their children and she would wash, too,
And be a mother, th' humblest and carefullest
Among them in every sweet common sense.
Snowy, soft, fine, fragrant, which is purest,
The linen Jesus has worn, or Mary's hands?
Mary's hands that were made to handle HIM!

Meantime, while Mary washed the garments,
Jesus sat by on one of the green banks around,
Gravely watching His mother's operations
At the spring. It is one of those mornings
Seen nowhere else than upon the Nile.
It is the morning before the Sabbath.
Mary is washing the tunic of Jesus
And a pocket-handkerchief for Joseph
And herself, and some other things they will want
Next day when they go to the synagogue.
Mary would have everything very clean
To appear in the house of God.

Joseph

Is busy at his bench while she is at work
Upon the hill or knoll back of the house
At the spring.

She has finished her work and come
Back to her Child whom she had lain, meantime,
Under a dwarf-tree that grew upon the spot.
He has dropped asleep, as it seems. She kneels
And looks into His face. "She never a moment
Forgot what Child He was." "Kneeling by Him
She saw something that we do not see,"
And "gathers Him up into her arms as mothers
Do their infants, so softly they do not wake,"
And sits down under a tree by the spring
For Him to sleep in her arms.

As He slept

She saw upon her lap a pure Fountain
Where the leprous world could wash and be clean,
And she saw many generations and peoples
Coming up to her lap to draw from this Fountain;
And all they that drew were purified;
And the Fountain could not restrain itself,
But flowed out and overflowed the whole earth;
And wherever as soon as it appeared,
The unfruitful places began to break
Into blossom as a garden filled with flowers;
And there leaned nearest the waters where they flowed
Lilies of marvelous whiteness, and roses
As drops of the Precious Blood. She shivered
And smiled, then leaned to the flowers. They had all
Sweetness as the waters that had watered the sand
Where they sprang; and innumerable angels
Were plucking the flowers. Some were bending
In admiration over the flowers before they plucked
Them—others just severing the stems that shed
In the air a sweetness as they were broken;

Other angels were just arising from the earth
With the flowers in their hands, that, as they sailed
Up heavenward, sent back their fragrance sweeter
And sweeter; and as she looked downward, the farther
She looked the more the flowers and the angels
Thickened; and as she still leaned toward the flowers,
She saw in each flower a human face,
And each face was as the face of a saint;
Salome was there, Mary Cleophas, Anna,
Joachim—and there was Joseph! In rapture
She who was always tranquil bowed her lips
To the wave of the Fountain—she kissed the brow
Of the Child. The Child opened those grave eyes—
Those deep, mysterious eyes upon her. Sweet startled,
She gathers Him up into the blanket
Of her apron, goes to the bushes, gathers
The little pieces that have dried in the sun
And takes them with the Child into the house.

Sweet spot of the Holy Infancy! Pilgrims
Come here to drink now and to pluck sweet leaves
From the thorn-bushes where Mary's washing hung.

THE HOUSE OF HONEY.

Joseph's home that he has made in Egypt
Is lovely: such as this old pagan land
Has never before seen. It is transfigured
Where Jesus, Mary and Joseph go, away,
Where they consent to dwell. It in Egypt,
Is even so—"land of manifold evils
And privations of exile." To Joseph

It is Heaven where Jesus and Mary are;
For Mary, to live with the Child Jesus
And Joseph, enough Heaven upon this earth :
Better than all places, or good without them two.

They dwelt as in a hermitage in Egypt.
Joseph's soul, having such objects to love,
Grew lovely fast—and in how many ways!
He had to love that little Child in his house
So many ways: Th' Prince of Peace to him come—
The young Councilor, Mighty, of his own race
And own Davidic line—from Joachim's house—
From Mary's bosom—as sweet Mary's child—
As the Child of the Holy Ghost, whom, also,
As Mary's Supreme Spouse, he, too, represents,
And is the shadow of upon the earth,
As of the Eternal Father, the shadow;
As his God—for that fair human nature—
“Because He was so winsome and attractive”—
This wonderful and beautiful child-God—
As the Messiah Child four thousand years
Waited for—th' Prince Royal Branch of Jesse—
His earthly and Heavenly King—th' Shiloh come—
And added to, his love for one—so sweet a One—
That he had saved from danger and from death;
But most because he stood as His father
And God had given him a parent's love
Befitting to the man who represented
Him. Joseph loved Jesus as his dear child—
His child encompassed with Divine perfections—
As the Fruit of untranslateable beauty
And sweetness of his virginal marriage.

All of Joseph's thoughts grew with beauty
 His words of simple wisdom—every act—
 His very look grew evermore beautiful.
 The tall wall of Jasper that surrounded
 The Tower of Ivory and the Lovely Child,
 Grew each day, deep and wide and high and bright;
 And Mary each day more loved her Protection;
 And the more Mary esteemed Joseph, th' more
 His holy attachment grew for her; all
 Of his sublime reasons for loving Jesus
 Mingled with his affection for Mary :
 And the Child from the Father loved them both
 More than they loved Him. Th' most luminous loves
 Of the earthly trinity are illuminated
 “By quivering beams that seem rather to belong
 To the inward life of th' Heavenly Trinity;”
 By pulses of light “adorably communicated
 To that sweetest growth of creation”—
 The Holy Family.

Little bee-hive house,
 How much honey of Paradise thou didst hold !
 The honey of the holy heart of Joseph—
 The honey of Mary's sweetest affections—
 Incomparable little bee-hive-shaped house,
 Thou didst hold all th' honey of humanity
 And the sweetest Honey of Heaven—JESUS.
 “Truly was On, or Heliopolis” now
 The “city of the sun,” for the true sun
 Dwelt here. Bees, too, are th' figure of wisdom
 And of industry. What wisdom this house
 Contained and what sweet industry;
 And hidden from all much observation,

It stood upon a green bank of the Nile
In th' neighborhood of some large nopal trees.

THE FOSTER-FATHER.

When Mary took some of her spinning home,
Or was occupied with care of her house,
Then it was that Joseph would with grave joy
Appropriate Jesus. So much he loved
To tend Him. While still an Infant,
He would steal away with Him by himself
And sit upon the banks of the river
For hours together: with Him in his arms
He was supremely happy. He would sit
Under the trees by the river and hum
To the Child like any mother—holding
Him against his large breast, sing low and soft
To Jesus, which the Babe appeared to love
Very much. How lovely It would cling
A little more close to th' breast of Joseph.
Joseph often wondered that he should sing,
But somehow could not so help for his joy;
His foster-fatherhood so called it out;
And the Babe loved to hear him—so seemed.
It was delicious to see Saint Joseph
Under the trees by the flowing river—
In the piazza of the little house—
Holding Jesus and humming sweet tunes
To Him, or in rich silence absorbed,
Folding the Holy Infant in his arms:
Joseph bears the exile beautifully.

“ST. JOSEPH, NURSING-FATHER TO HIM BY WHOM ALL THINGS
LIVE, PRAY FOR US.”

The Child being older, Joseph "would make
For Him a seat on one end of his bench
Among the shavings," where with gravity
He "would watch the progress of the auger,"
Or "how His father handled the chisel."
"At length He was large enough to stand by th' bench."

Then when Joseph wanted timber and went
Up the banks of the river where it grew
For it, he would take Him with him. He would
At such times show Him th' river-crocodile
At a distance, and tell Him th' poor idolaters
Here worshiped these monsters—all which Jesus
Before knew, but was pleased to have him tell
To Him. He would show Him th' nest of the swan.
Sometimes a solitary swan, and sometimes
Two together, would sail down the river.
Sometimes they would hear the swans sing.
One day they heard the death-song. Joseph stood
Breathless—not more breathless than the Child stood
Beside him. That Child who made all these things
Will be a human Child and have His father
Conduct toward Him as a father toward his child.

I cannot—no, I am unable to say
Whether legend or dream: One day Joseph
Took Jesus with him when he went to cut
Timber. He let the Child see the fishes
At the bottom of the river, and left
Him to gather lilies for His mother
While he selected and cut down a tree;
And, the tree being ready, was alarmed

To not find the Child. He searched in his haste
The bank some way up, and finding no trace,
He hastened to the house, saying the Child
Has gone to His mother. Come to the house,
Mary had gone to take home some work—th' house
Was alone : all things said alone ! He grew
Very frightened for the Child, retracing
All his steps—searching every thicket,
Every little cove among the rushes—
Every nook—often raising his hands
In anguish, shedding many tears, calling
Through th' wood Jesus by His name often aloud ;
And for three hours found Him not ; yet could not
Once give Him up ; and how could he go back
To Mary without th' Child ? ' If He is gone,'
Said Joseph, ' I can never go back to Mary
Till I find Him, I can never look up
To the Father who placed Him in my care !
How have I taken care of His dear Son !
And why did I not charge Him to stay ?
He always obeys, beautiful Divine One !
If I find Him again'—

He had explored
Farther up the bank than he thought the Child
Could have strayed. He stands indeterminate
What to do. He is just beginning to stand
Paralyzed when he sees a purple speck
On a little promontory farther up
The river. It may be a swan, he says,
But he knows that it is not. He was faint
Almost for his joy ; but he ran toward—
He flew till he came where he could see well,

When he paused. It was HIM! wonderful Boy!
The Divine Child was seated upon a rock,
Upon the very edge of the river:
All the animals found upon these banks
Were gathered around Him, and in the tree
Over His head the birds found in Egypt;
Upon the river the swans were listening.
One of the birds was purple like His tunic,
The other white as the lilies retained
In His hand for His adored Mother.
He was preaching to His assembled creatures—
Th' fishes at His feet; and that was not all—
A hideous, "cunning, glittering-fanged monster"
Lay but a brief distance off—expanded
Almost within reach of His feet that hung
Over the water—lay "cruelly winking
His eye at Him." Joseph was awed; but he saw,
Or imagined that he saw, a movement
Of th' treacherous crocodile, and he caught
Up the Child in his strong arms and fled.
After this he was more careful—careful
Never to lose sight of Jesus when Jesus
Was with him by the river or in the fields.

"ST. JOSEPH, THE REPUTED FATHER OF THE SON OF GOD,
PRAY FOR US."



MY SON OUT OF EGYPT.

EIGHT—nine years in Egypt and yet no signs
Of a recall. Joseph and Mary begin
To feel that they are planted, or would,
Only they know they are waiting. Joseph
Has another dream. St. Raphael appears
To him again in the night as he sleeps
In the latticed porch of his little house—
Where he always slept while in Egypt—
So he felt to guard the Mother and Child,
In this land of strangers. In the morning
We shall see what Joseph will do ; so shall
We know what the angel has told him. Mary
And Jesus seem to sleep calmly within
While th' angel converses for a moment
With Joseph. All the city is buried
In a very deep slumber. No one there knows
An angel is in the city. Why should
They ? God has been among them several years
And they have never discovered it yet.

Joseph is coming with old Asinus
Through the gate of the little house. Mary
With Jesus accompanies him. The birds
Are singing their sweetest matins. They go
Down the little path beside the river ;
Th' richness of sunrise with its enchantments
Clothes th' beautiful bank of the Nile. In vain !
Old Egypt. " It is morning in their hearts
As well." " Joseph's dream is being accomplished."

“ They have a glory around them in haloes ”—
A brightness around even the poor beast
That bore Mary and the Babe to Egypt
And is going with them back. Nothing could
Detain them now. They hurry on t’ overtake
The caravan that started before th’ dawn.
They have nothing to pay—the eve before
They had distributed their last provisions
To some sufferers who came to their door.
Joseph might have disposed of his tools
For bread. God will dispose the caravansarie.
The men welcome Joseph, the women, Mary;
“ That Boy gladdens the whole caravan.”
“ Jesus in the desert the second time—the desert
Is twice blessed.” “ All three are on foot now. Th’ Boy
Walks between His father and His mother.”
When the Feet of the little boy-God grow tired
And sore from travelling over the hot sand,
The foster-father puts him upon the ass
To ride. Th’ kind master of this family
Would not suffer them to walk all the way :
The tender feet of Jesus and Mary
Are too soon bleeding ; but they walk as much
As they can ; no one ever bore hardships
So well as Jesus and Mary.

Three leagues

From Palestine : the whole caravan press on.
Crossing the green pastures of Benjamin.
Drawing near his old home, Joseph considers
Should any evil be stirred up again
The Child would be less like to be sought there ;
It would be good to dwell by his aged parents

While they might live : but as he came where th' roads
Diverged, a man met them who was from that place,
Of whom he enquired concerning the rule,
And feared to go up more than to Nazareth.

Drawing near Nazareth—Mary's sweet Nazareth !
The little house is seen upon the hill.
There is the olden look of contentment
In Joseph's face. Now Joseph is happier
Than if he had gone up to his old home :
As we may " come nigh to some seeming rest
In life and lose it, to after that reach
A better rest through disappointment." Look
In the face of Mary ! Look in the sweet Face
Of Almighty God's dear Boy ! " All three wear
The look in their faces of those entering
Heaven." The little Hill trembles.

Look down, O, trembling Hill ! and see
Thy best beloved ones come back to thee.

To glorify yet more thy blessed bowers
And dwell with thee a hundred thousand hours !

Look down, O sweet-expectant Hill ! and see
The King of all earth's kings come back to thee.

Look down, O Hill most fructified ! and see
The Rose from thy fair sod come back to thee.

Look down, O Mount, as paradise ! and see
The Father of the patriarchs come back to thee.

Consider and regard them kneeling on the sward

Before the house, Joseph returning thanks
To God that He has enabled him to bring back
The mother and his dear Child in safety.
Behold little Jesus of Nazareth knelt
For the first time upon the green plat
Before His ancestors' door to adore
His Father who is in heaven.

“ Jesus ! O Jesus !
Shadows of earth and sadness depart.
Jesus ! O Jesus !
The angels have mirth ; hope brightens our heart ! ”







Nazareth.

The Holy Family again at home—The last eighteen years of the Life of our dear Saint Joseph in Nazareth.

(Mary in the early morning upon the lawn before her house.)

“As the sun o’er misty shrouds
When he walks upon the clouds;
Or as when the moon doth rise
And refreshes all the skies;
Or as when the lily-flower
Stands amid the vernal bower;
Thus above all others shone
The Mother of the Blessed One.”

“The Blessed One, He stands beside—
Mary’s crown and love and pride—
A Flower of beauty rare”—

“Most like of all earth’s gems
To the Virgin Mother bright.”

“O vision bright!”

“Angels delight!”

“Her form He bears.

Her look He wears!”—*Ave Maria.*



AND while yet early, the villagers came,
Who saw a smoke from the cottage,
To see who now inhabited the place;
And when they saw Mary and her family
Had returned to dwell near them again,
Whom they had given up in their minds
As dead, they welcomed them with much kindness
Nazareth was a quiet little hamlet

In the most mountainous part of Syria,
All the inhabitants poor; but the poorest
Were glad to see Joseph come back to end
His days among them. How could they receive
Other than kind that benevolent old man?
But they were all surprised to see how old
He had grown. His journeyings and his toils,
His anxieties, his humiliations untold—
His surroundings by the idolaters—
His zeal for the true God and for the souls
Of the pagan, all these had burdened our Saint
And had diminished his days; but it was
For God. How happy it is to grow old
For God; how happy to be quickly ripe.
Meantime, Mary so sweet and so serene,
Only more blooming, so untouched by time.
The old neighbors wondered to find Joseph
So old and Mary so young and fair still.
The sweet fact they knew not what blessed Fruit
She had borne: how It had impregnated,
Or imbued not only all her spirit,
But likewise all her precious person
With a fragrance and a youth that could not
Perish or decay. They simply wondered
And took a sweet pride in her as the Flower
Of their hills. She was their child, and the Boy,
Shy and beautiful, that clung silently
By her side, was the Fruit of their flower;
But Salome and Zebedec, her spouse,
Most were glad, and the poor all rejoiced:
They would sympathize with their sufferings;
They would find out for them ways of help.

Blessed Mary, though the walls were damp, went
To housekeeping again in her little house.
Tradition says that a bird had a nest
In a niche of the wall of her chamber,
And the bird remained and reared her young there,
And the Christ Boy fed the birds crumbs
That His mother gathered from the table—
Only th' Creator feeding His creatures—
“Visible sight of what He does every day.”

FAITHFUL ELEAZER.

Joseph resumed his labors the next day
After their arrival. He had no more
Any servant. Old and faithful Eleazer,
After the departure, when they had fled—
For they went in secrecy and by night—
When he had sought as much as he could,
When after the massacre of the Innocents
They yet returned not, then his heart was sick.
Zebedee and Salome would have taken him in,
But he would not depart from or leave
The old house in which his master had died,
Where the child of his master had been born;
Even Mary, the dear Flower his old eyes
Had worshiped; But he would walk all the day
Through the pastures as seeking some one,
And tended the herd in those days, saying,
‘They will come!’ And the few sheep only left
Now of the many that had been Joachim’s;
But the wolves broke in and the robbers
(Wolves and robbers have always envied Mary’s fold).
And when the old servant had no more care,

He sat down under the tree where Joachim
Had sat the summer before he died,
All the day long, and he answered not
When any one spake unto him, and one day
He died there. And Zebedee and his sons
Buried him under the tree where he had died ;
And Mary, when returned to Nazareth, saw
The grave of Eleazer, and remembered
All of his fidelity unto her father
And unto her mother all of the days
She was a widow, and all of his care
And very tender love for her, and his joy
When she brought home Jesus, and she visited
His grave and prayed for th' repose of his soul.

JOSEPH'S FRIENDS COME TO REJOICE WITH HIM.

Nor was it long before Cleophas came
With his wife, and Soba and her husband
To rejoice with Joseph and his family,
Whom they supposed dead.

Mary Cleophas
Brought her young son, James, with her. Old men
Who had known Joseph when a boy, said
The lad was like his uncle. This nephew
Was a remarkable and pious boy
And loved the synagogue while yet a child ;
But from the time he heard of the massacre
Of the young children, and what had become
Of th' family of Joseph, was not known,
He grew pensive, insomuch, that his parents
Remarked and refrained to speak of the slaughter.
In his presence ; and the delight of the child

Overflowed when they heard of the return,
And he besought to go up with his parents.

See those two boys meet: Cleophas advances
A little ahead—Mary Cleophas leads
Her timid, beaming young boy by the hand,
But a step in the rear—Joseph and Mary
And Jesus come upon the lawn to meet
Them. Cleophas has fallen upon the neck
Of Joseph. The Blessed Virgin embraces
Her sister-in-law—the wives of such brothers—
Beautiful tie between these two Marys!
Cleophas is alone in the Gospels, by name,
Honored—“His brethren believed not in Him (Jesus.)
The other sons of Jacob and their sons; so were
Their names not written; Cleophas believed;
So was his name, for his faith, written.

James the shy boy of Mary Cleophas felt
At first some considerable timidity
As he and his mother approached nearer
To Jesus. An imperceptible sanctity
Met and retarded him. The Divine Cousin
Sweetly looks on His little relative—
One irresistible glance—the bashfulness
Melts. Drawn to His arms, with a pure, young
And holy warmth, the all-privileged boy
Kisses with a delicious boyish ardor
His Imperial Brother's cheeks—both cheeks—
And his two arms around Him, holds Him, hugs
Him with a saint's and with a boy's enthusiasm,
To his happy—to his too happy heart.

JESUS—"My brother!" JAMES—"My Brother!"
"Ask and ye shall receive." So had James done,
At first claimed Jesus; so Jesus received
James: so their parents called him the brother;
So the Apostles afterward. He kept holy
His purity. Jesus loved him. He was one
Of His Three—that trinity in the Twelve—
Christ's Three—the Vicar, the Brother, the Friend:
And James occupies the order of place here
That Jesus does in the Heavenly Trinity.
James in the trinity of the Apostles,
As the second person represents Jesus
And is His shadow, as Peter the shadow
Of the Paternity and John th' shadow
Of the Holy Spirit. Nor, thus clearly
Can we recognize in the authority
Of Peter the shadow of the Father,
And the character of the Holy Ghost—
That is love, in John, but must observe
Th' shadow of th' Divine Brother in him named
Thus mystically—"James the Lord's brother."

Cleophas told Joseph all the last words
Of Jacob their father, and of their mother,
Both of whom died mourning—and presented
The portion as had Jacob his father
Designed before he regarded him dead;
Which Joseph would have persuaded him to keep;
But when Cleophas had pressed him, he took
It; but before many days had disbursed
It all to the needy—some poor lepers
Not suffered to come nigh to the hamlet,

But who dwelt upon the mountains apart,
And none in charity visited for fear
Of the leprosy, but the Blessed Virgin
And Saint Joseph, and whom Joseph desired
To help, but had no means before this came :
Saint Joseph himself felt so rich with Jesus
And Mary that he did not wish for more ;
But he remembered when Cleophas pressed
Him these, and so took the silver for his poor.
The poor, it has been said were Joseph's heirloom.

PICTURE OF JESUS A BOY.—BY SAINT LUKE.

Only picture of Jesus a boy in the Gospels :
The Three going up to the Feast. They go
Down the narrow lane from the Hill
To the hamlet. It is only the grey
Of the morning ; but there is a halo
Around their heads that reflects upon th' path
And reveals who they are distinctly.
Joseph's heart beats with a very deep joy :
It is a long time since they have trod
Th' amiable courts. He longs once more to join
In the grand worship of God in the temple.
Mary moves very serenely sweet on ;
But Jerusalem can never be the same
As before that prophecy of Simeon :
She has a fear of it now, but " Mary
Was never afraid to do her duty."
Never hesitates to go anywhere
With Joseph and Jesus. We only look
Into the still beautiful face of the Boy.

The Blessed Virgin Mary in the temple :

Th' good old High Priest who blest her reception
And marriage is dead, and a strange High Priest
In his place—Eleazer, the very old priest,
Whose favorite she was—Anna the old
And venerable matron of the almahs—dead :
All the almahs she had known, gone : Simeon
The old prophet to her, had died soon after.
But more than all Mary felt the absence
Of Zachary, for she missed him at th' altars :
She missed his benediction, the blessing
He alway had for Anna's and Joachim's child,
And for her own sweetness' sake. There were none
Of the priests of the temple in her time there,
Had loved and understood Mary as Zachary.
There had been a great change in the priests
And in the priesthood. The rule in the land
Had told here. The brows of the priests were sterner.
Mary saw it and felt that presentiment,
A grand old religion was dying, or passing
Without dying—which is worse—into change.
There has been a greater change than these deaths,
Or translations. All felt it. None could have felt
It more than Mary. 'He?' God is always
Excepted. All His saints never felt a defalcation
In His Church, a diminution in piety
As He. Mary had felt the change at Nazareth,
When she came back after her long exile ;
But not as she felt it here. The Saints never feel
A change in anything as in religion ;
Nothing touches them as a heresy.
Jesus kneels where Joseph did when a boy.

The Boy Jesus stays behind in th' temple.
 He is a Priest and has a love for th' house
 Of God ; besides it is His Father's house ;
 And where should His home be if not
 In His Father's house ? But how Mary lost
 Her dear Son—how she sorrowed ; how Joseph
 Sorrowed ; how they sought for Him ; how they found
 Him sounding the doctors, and took Him back
 With them, is written in our "*Rosa Mystica*."

A saint has said Jesus sought for the stole
 Of obedience through heaven, and finding it not,
 Came down to the shop of the carpenter.
 Good Saint Joseph don't mean to lose Jesus
 Again. He holds His hand close as they go
 Home together—almost with authority.
 The hand trembles, but does not quit its hold
 Of his Infinite Lord. "He understands
 His relations to the Incarnate Word."
 To perform it is his great obedience.
 "Self-subjection falls like a veil of light"
 "Over his face" when he commands Jesus ;
 But he commands Him. If honors humble
 Saints, how humble Saint Joseph must have been.

"Nobly didst thou bear thy title,
 Father of the Incarnate Word !
 Every part of His creation
 With thy glorious fame is stirred."—M. L. M.

"ST. JOSEPH, RULER OF THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, PRAY
 FOR US."

The little chamber at Nazareth that night :
 Mary has said His night-prayers with Jesus ;

She tucks up the little red coverlet—
Of the same color as the Precious Blood—
Over those dear, divine limbs. She stands now
On her knees by the side of His cot-bed.
She bends her head for a mother's good-night.
We may think how Mary always caressed
The cheek of her Divine Child. We may think
How she pressed it that night. She had feared
He was irrecoverably lost She has
Her ineffable Child again. Her heart
Is too full for words now. She is silent.
She has just kissed her own darling Boy.
She has just kissed—it was her privilege—
The blessed cheek of the Infinite God!
The beautiful Child has put His arms up
About her neck “with a child's sweetest payment.”

Joseph is looking in at th' chamber-door,
As if to reassure himself Jesus is there.

The depth of the night: We look around
In the two still rooms. Joseph is sleeping
In one room—Mary and Jesus in th' other;
A quiver of rays from the eyes of the moon
As she watches through the little lattice,
Open to the sweet night, comes to stand
Around their faces. Sleep sweet, sweet Jesus!
Sleep sweet, O Virgin Mary! Sleep sweet,
O “Mirror of Sanctity—Saint Joseph
Of Nazareth—master of the Hidden Life!”
You shall have Jesus now eighteen years.

GLIMPSES OF NAZARETH.

The Human Life of Jesus Developed.

“And He grew in favor with God and man.”

We have looked upon the one sacred painting
Of the young Immanuel Boy—a dark veil
There is at best betwixt us and the years
Of the Hidden Life after this—thick-lined
With nigh twenty centuries. “The veil now
And then parts, so we see in a little.
It is a little. A kind angel draws
The folds back, or a wind of grace blows
The jealous curtain aside for a moment,
Just so we see how utterly lonesome
We must inevitably be, did it never part.
But the veil is there, over these dearest years,
That imagination reveres, and from hence
Th’ deep folds but infold th’ more mystically :
It the more seldom opens after Joseph
And Mary, having brought Jesus back
From the temple, go within with Him ;
And yet it does open : still opens up
Some illumined moment, so to give glimpses,
All which, when it does, are as paradise ;
When it parts never so little, we catch
Such sweet visions. Words have jeweled frames,
But none with diamonds enough for these pictures..
Now we see Mary walking in her garden
With Jesus, and it is revealed anon
That it is His birthday. He is almost
A year older now than when we last saw
Him, and has not before seen a birthday

In His own home: the first was in Bethlehem,
The next in Egypt, th' last when in th' desert
The second time. Who would have thought that night
Of the Annunciation, when the hill shone
And was so sanctified, Nazareth must wait
So many years to see His first birthday?
But it has come, and Mary, sweet Mother
Of Jesus, walks in the garden with her Son
To-day under the old pomegranate trees.
O woman, who is to walk in the gardens
Of Paradise! She walks now in a garden
Of sweet paradise, for she walks with Jesus
In the dear old garden of Nazareth.

“O Mother of fair Love!”
“O Child of Face Divine!”

The sound of the hammer is heard in Joseph's shop.

“We hear the echo sweet
Of Jesus' words to Mary.”

Joseph looks out at the little window
Of his shop into the garden below:
Jesus and Mary are near the window,
Conversing together gravely quiet.

A mist has arisen and we see not Jesus—
Not God; for Jesus is God—beautiful thought
Always to keep. It is what makes the life
Of Mary and Joseph so bright, and Nazareth
A Paradise—God is there. It is God
With them. If we watch, too, we may observe
From day to day the young Lord Jesus Christ

Giving charities at the door of His ancestors—
A God giving out charities at the door
Of His human ancestors—Christ breaking
Bread at the door of His mother's house.
Mary would often place her donation
In the hands of Jesus to give: So would
She teach her Son who needed no teaching,
To compassionate all the unfortunate
Around Him; and she loved to have it pass
Through His hands. The indigent and suffering
Never forgot the door of Mary or the shop
Of Joseph.

O, to have been the ancestors
Of Almighty God! Holy Joachim—Anna,
Sleeping in your graves in that holy cave
At the foot of the gardens. O, to have been
One of the poor who received a morsel
From the sweet hand of the Christ at the door
Of His mother! We may now. We are poor;
Let us go to Mary's door and beg.

JESUS WORKS:

It is very still and lovely: all is so mystical
We see no one before the door to-day.
We venture to walk under the palm trees;
But we hear no stir. We peer half within,
Deliciously curious. O, how solitary
It is! The dear House is empty, we feel
Rather than see. We regard the threshold.
We would not pass over where Jesus has,
Where those Holy Personages go in and out,
And they absent—not in th' free permittance

Of poesy—our imagination, too,
Must even be pious.

But, the little shop
In the edge of the orchard, the door
Is open—

“The litter of a working-place :
Boards propped against the near wall—pieces
Of wood—straight lines of saw-dust—saw and square—
A cask of nails—hammer—augers, mingling
In the apparent confusion ; implements
Of agriculture that wait for repair,
Inside and outside of the door. Joseph
Showing young Jesus how to do some work.
His broad, man’s hand laid over the small hand
Of the Boy, guiding the Omnipotent Hand
Gently, but mechanically—gazing
Rather on the Saviour’s Face than the work ;
Recognizing the Eternal Worker,
Who so fashioned the world, whose fingers
He th’ aged carpenter is venturing now
To press and guide. He knows it is simply
Man teaching God. Th’ old man’s face overflows
With awe ; but he desists not from guiding
The hand—does not interrupt the lesson.

“Mary is sitting in the farther corner
Of the shop, where she used to sit for hours
When Joseph and Jesus worked in the shop.
She has some sewing ; but her eyes are more
On Jesus than on her work. Not a word
Is spoken in the shop for hours. There was
Too much peace—too much of the divine.

The shop of Joseph is as a tabernacle.*
 Let us go up the hills to recover ourself,
 We are too weak to look upon that man
 Who ventures to teach his Creator. Let
 Us sit down and revolve the character
 Of th' blessed Saint Joseph—Of Mary's lord.

"We cannot avoid picturing him, as one fitted for contemplation rather than action. . . Both on account of his excelling tenderness and also of his remarkable quietness of spirit." . . .
 "The very ages of the Church have had as well as his own precious devotees to learn him slowly." "And each of the ages has given surprise at finding him a considerable mountain of virtues more than had been known in the ages gone before."
 "The graces of St. Joseph are as the virtues of the master of God's household."—BETHLEHEM.

But in order to understand the least
 Of the goodness of Saint Joseph, we must come
 And live nearer to his door in Nazareth ;
 Where the calm depth of his character will grow
 Upon us as most things supernatural—slowly.
 Saint Joseph was sanctified in Bethlehem
 And in place. Saint Joseph was beautiful
 In the desert and Egypt and in place.
 Everywhere with the young Child and Mary,
 Saint Joseph is paternal and perfect :
 But our dear Saint is at home in Nazareth :
 No more journeyings, no more hard exile ;
 His deep, fatherly heart has nothing here
 To do but to pour out love for Jesus
 And Mary ; and " we may see how Jesus
 Feeds on this sweet, unobtrusive homage."

* "The litter of a common working-place," &c.—Faber's description of Joseph's work-shop.—BETHLEHEM.

That our Saint pours to Him—"feeds"—so allows
It. In its sweetness, we, too, fall asleep
Under th' trees upon th' hillside of Nazareth,
Caressing a sweet vision that has come
Of the lad-Jesus, caressing Saint Joseph.
We close our eyes to think what it must have been.
He sometimes caresses souls to whom He comes—
They who have sweet sacramental communions
With Jesus, can picture somewhat Joseph's joy.

The old man has fallen asleep by the bench
In his shop. That beautiful carpenter Boy
Of twelve and a half or thirteen years,
Is regarding him now. He lays His hand
On the sleeper's hand—it is half a caress
And half an inquiry if the old man
Is asleep—although He knows well enough
He is asleep. He used to caress that hand
When a child. He would caress when a child
The hand of Joseph with such a grave awe;
Then as a human child—as any dear boy,
He would put those little faultless arms up—
Would entwine His arms about his neck.
He is older now; but when the old Saint
Is asleep, He will take the liberty.
See th' darling Divine Boy! He has just laid
His cheek to that old man's cheek. He has
Just tried th' effect, and he does not waken.
Jesus knew he would not. Joseph sleeps now,
Only more in an ecstasy than sleep.
Jesus lays His lips on that dear brow, rich
With wrinkles. When th' lips of Jesus have pressed,

A brightness only overspreads th' whole face :
That is all. All! God kiss the brow of man!

Sleeping—they come—a bevy of visions—
A celestial catacomb, winding the one
Into the other—now at a distance,
Only to be in the next instance back,
Walking amid th' thyme before Mary's door ;
We behold the outer porch of the cottage
Then th' interior of the holy house comes
Before us again, which we know so well,
“And Joseph's shop and the green swelling hills
Are seen through the open doorway.” Mary
Is seated in th' doorway of her dwelling,
Spinning—“though at this moment her work
Is arrested.” She is looking upon Jesus
And “Jesus is near her looking fixed
At some doves He is feeding at the door.”
Mary is gazing upon her Son with one
Of her peculiarly lovely “mother-looks
Passing into adoration.” “We look
Every moment to see her at His feet.”
Why this is she does not exactly know ;
Yet it is not new, for there have been times
Like this before—“When His apparent growth
Has dawned upon her through some gesture
Or look seemingly trivial.” It is the book!
Th' book we have been reading reappearing
In our dream. It is just the book we brought
With us into th' Nazareth mountains to read :

“It is just as with mothers whose eyes do not see their children
grow, but who wake up to the fact now and then that they have

grown, that some sweet, interesting change has taken place in them." "It is the hour of one of those heavenly surprises now. Mary looks as we might fancy an angel might look . . . for the first time seeing something new in God, yet which was always there."

Lay it up; lay it far up on the shelf;
That sweet book, "*Bethlehem!*" We trespass
Too much; we will not look into it again.

Many sweet things go by indistinctly;
And there is th' soft sleep too quiet for dreams—
Something as the dear peace of Nazareth—
As at the foot of the altar, on the step
Lowest down in some solitary chapel—
Some warm afternoon after having prayed.

The afternoon is going by. What was
It that awakened us? Perhaps a ray
From the Boy, or from the heart of Joseph:
Some one is coming through the wood
Above us. It is Joseph, who has been
To the mountains for a beam of timber.
He has a large beam upon his shoulder
And Jesus is carrying a smaller beam
Beside him. They come silently down

They have gone by and we are left alone!
To quench the thirst of our eyes, we must see
Nazareth again and the Child that belongs
To heaven, but is upon the earth! We are
So weary of earth! Yet who must not wait
Spiritual sweetnesses, till as surprises
They come. But, soul, we are near Mary's home!

"ST. JOSEPH, ORGAN OF THE DIVINE WORD REDUCED TO SILENCE, PRAY FOR US!"

JESUS FIFTEEN YEARS OLD.

Jesus stands before Mary's door. The Boy
Has now grown to a youth—tall and graceful
In His young God-likeness—"a pure form ;"
A physique, slender—very admirable ;—
The gold on His Head darkens—th' curls taking
A browner hue, and "there is the first line
Of a beard on His delicate cheek." How pure
Modest and recollect his countenance !
O, to look into the Face of Jesus !
To see the cheek of the Incarnate Youth !
The lineaments of the divine God-youth !
St. Aloysius—St. Stanislaus were angel youths—
Beautiful youths ! more angels than men !
What were Saints Aloysius and Stanislaus
Compared with Jesus of Nazareth ? Did
You ever think of JESUS AT FIFTEEN ?
He has been just those years upon the earth.
He stands in the doorway so pensive and sweet.
Perhaps He is thinking of this. Doubtless
He remembers, dear Youth of the Precious Blood !

Saint Joseph sits upon a low narrow bench
That stands beside the door—his eyes are closed.
We might think he slept but for the trembling
Of the lids and th' tender ripples of light
Running over that holy countenance.
Mary may be seen at the casement, looking
Into the clouds—and anon upon Jesus ;—
The clouds seem to be full of angels to-day.

EIGHTEEN.

He is the young God-man—Precious Christ!
He works and Joseph rests. They are employed
In the shop. There is a wondrous royalty
In the grave simplicity of that young man;
An out-gleam of resplendent mysteries
At times. Jesus is eighteen—eighteen! He works!

A tradesman comes from one of the villages
Near Nazareth to procure a trellis-work;
Examining the good work in that shop,
Would pause sudden, stand and look at the tall
And silent young man gravely driving his plane
At the work-bench, and would ask is this thy Son?
How Joseph's heart would beat—what a strange leap
It would give; yet only a look would come
Into his face as grave and strange as bright,
As he would answer—Son of th' Lord who gave,
May He, His servant behold! And the man
Would go his way comprehending not,
Yet saying to himself as he departed,
A man as good as the patriarch Abraham;
That Youth, of what sedateness and beauty.
Strange carpenters these! I will purchase here
All I may need. Here is where I shall buy.

Another man comes one day to the shop—
It is to order a yoke—Joseph takes
The order of the yoke, Jesus is to make.
The farmer passes out—Joseph follows
To the door—Says the man in a low voice
To Joseph, standing upon th' steps—He was

Modest and did not wish Jesus should hear—
' People say there is not such a young man
In all the country round.' A deep look comes
Into Joseph's eyes. It is a sweet thing to Joseph
To hear Jesus praised.

A rich woman sends
From a far town for a chest to be made
In which to store linen. Jesus made th' chest :
No linens ever moulded therein : th' sheets
Came out therefrom redolent with odor
As the scent of the apothecaries ointment
Poured thereon, very precious.

Blessed Mary
Is busy in her house with her needle,
Forming a garment for Joseph—at work
On a rug under which Jesus will sleep—
Arranging the tapestries where God has slept—
Spreading th' couch where the Son of the Highest
Takes his repose—that lovely human rest,
Each night—or kneading the cakes. She has ground
Her barley and is kneading her bread to bake
In the ashes upon the hearth for breakfast.
Just to think of Mary getting breakfast !
And what then ? Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Taking breakfast together. The ingredients
Are meted, moulded, wrapped in th' scented leaf,
Lain in the heated stones to bake and tended
Till just right, crusted and cooked. Watch Mary,
Each little movement of her culinaries.
The Blessed Mother knows for what dignities
She performs every act of labor. She knows
The angels observe everything she does

And wish they could do what she is doing,
And she never thinks she could do anything
Too well for Joseph, sweet model spouse ;
And for Him—O, there is nothing on this earth
Good enough for Him! *Her Jesus!* Sweet Son
Of her virginity and of the Father
Who is in Heaven! How the Blessed Virgin
Must have dreamed over it at her work. Watch
Her at all her varied toils in the fair morn,
Or when the eve drops down with sweet dews
Upon Nazareth. We find her the same—
Th' lovely, eminently serene mother—
That is her grace, or air of all her graces :
Mary's serenity is her beauty. Mary
Is now the full blown Rose Immaculate.

The Christ in the first, fresh, bright, clear bloom
Of that one white, great, true manhood, how fair
He must have been to the heart and the eyes
Of Mary, His pure mother, and to the eyes
Of that worshipful old man, Joseph.

There is such kindness in the carpenter's son,
Talk two other patronnesses of the shop
Of Joseph, in the old lane to the hamlet—
Two neighboring women who have come out
From the shop : one wished for a loom mended,
The beam of which she had broken. Jesus
Has undertaken to do it. He loves to work
For His creatures—really loves to oblige
Them as never any saint did. He will do
The loom this afternoon, and thus fill full
The day with work.

‘When He speaks,’ says one,
‘No one ever heard such words’—‘A sweet voice’
‘A delicious voice!’ murmured both women,
Walking down from the hill together.
Jesus looking after them lovingly, stands
In the door. They never imagine He hears
All they say.

It is enough to see Jesus
As in a picture, standing before the door
Of the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth ;
To see Him in His peaceful godliness,
In the soft veil of th’ incarnation, walk
Over the green turf between the house and shop.
Mary is looking from the window now,
Is watching Him now through her lattice,
All which th’ dear Humanity sweetly knows,
But does not seem to know. Joseph is gazing
Upon Him, too, through the door of the shop.
Jesus of Nazareth has reached the door
Of the house and stands upon the threshold
To survey the beautiful hills around.
His eye sweeps very affectionately
The fields and the circuit of the hills,
Gloriously round about this dear Nazareth,
Sweeps tenderly th’ fair picture of landscape ;
It is humanly dear to Him, this fair home—
The paternal inheritance of Mary,
His mother—th’ old home of His human fathers.
Behold the loveliness of His countenance.

*“Thou art beautiful above the sons of men, therefore hath God
blessed Thee forever! Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O, Thou
Most Mighty! In thy comeliness and beauty go forth! Pro-
ceed prosperously and reign.”—PSALMS.*

JESUS TWENTY-TWO.

The full developed, young-man-God—Jesus Christ,
Twenty-two-years!—in the clear, sweet noonday,
Sitting under the three palms before the door—
His mother's roll of th' scriptures in His hand.
Sweet mother, she sits at His feet—Joseph
On a seat under the tree by Jesus.
These scriptures are dear to Jesus—are dear
To the humanity of the Sacred Heart—
It is the law to Him of His Heavenly Father—
It is, to Him, th' Book of the Holy Ghost—
For whom Jesus had such a tender love—
“*And they are they which do testify
Of me.*” Behold Jesus, the ancient roll
In His hand reading to His foster-father
And to His mother, and then explaining
As He reads as man never before explained.
Or it is the sunset as Jesus reads.
And He pauses reverently as the sun
Goes down and Joseph arises to lead
The night prayers. The Father of the Family
Never omits—never questions his office.
The Father arises and says “Let us pray,”
And the Three bow down with their faces
Toward Jerusalem.

And the prayer ended,
The Three will sit in their contemplation
And silence together until the twilight.

“ST. JOSEPH, HEAD OF THE MOST NOBLE AND HOLY FAMILY,
PRAY FOR US!”

Another time, while Mary, whose hands make
Housewifery holy—dear St. Joseph's wife—
Looks after the house, Jesus may be seen
Seated on a stool by Joseph—Joseph
In the old stone-seat by the doorway—
Jesus reading to him and expounding
To him the prophecies.

Another time

At noon, Joseph reposes in an arbor
In th' garden while Jesus converses with Mary.

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

Twenty-five years ago this afternoon
Mary was entering inhospital Bethlehem.
She is full of sweet thoughts of it to-day.
Joseph is thinking of that midnight-cave,
In his old accustomed seat by the door :
It makes the waves come and go in his face—
The waves of a peculiarly sweet light—
Mary comes to the side of her husband,
Hearing a *Gloria in excelsis*—
In the airs over the roof-tree of her house,
Stands by his side to hear the angels sing.
Joseph and Mary hear together th' singing.
Jesus is working by Himself in the shop.
It is His silver birth-day. What a quarter
Of a century it has been to that family.
God had been upon the earth then a quarter
Of a century—God lived twenty-five years !

ANNUNCIATION ANNIVERSARY AT NAZARETH.

The room in the rock—the alcove chamber,
Overlooking the gardens of Mary :
That same sacred parchment of Isias,
Mary was reading as the angel appeared
Twenty-eight years ago—lies on her desk,
That stands where she kne't that same glorious night :
The deep eyes of Jesus brood upon that spot,
And Mary is seated by the side of Jesus,
Looking upon th' same spot, keeping holy
That magnificent hour of the Deity
And of Christianity. The yellow moon
Of the evening is in the sky. They sit
Raptly there. They may sit there till th' midnight.

The room of the Annunciation has no need
Of tapers, the wide window at the mouth
Of the alcove is open to the sky,
And the anniversaries of the Incarnation
Are always very bright at Nazareth.
The nightingales sing in the gardens below
All night, or till an hour to the midnight,
When not the note of a nightingale, or bird
Is heard on the hill—not till the stars strike
Twelve—when they will gush forth in concerts
Of unequalled sweetness and mirth and sing
Till th' morning ; so have they sang twenty-eight times.

It is near the midnight—the moon has passed
Over the window—th' room is unlit now
By the lamp of the night—or in shadow—

The halo is deep round each—Jesus, Mary—
 Joseph lies upon the two steps that lead
 To the chamber where Mary and Jesus sit—
 That venerable head, that snowy beard,
 Reclining upon the door-sill in sleep—
 That benevolent, old, saintly face
 Upturned toward Jesus and Mary as though
 While he had worshipped, being an old man
 And easily overcome, he had fallen asleep,
 Dear old saint-man !

They have no need of tapers :

In the new Jerusalem they will have
 No need. The Lamb shall be the light there :
 The same Lamb, the light of this sacred chamber.
 The recollected midnight steps nearer.
 The haloes are deeper than an hour since
 Round Jesus and Mary—over th' silvery head
 Of Joseph who sleeps upon the threshold.
 In that beautiful sleep of adoration.
 We see the haloes deepen perceptibly—
 That is they glow more like gold and the bands
 Are not only around the heads of Jesus
 And Mary, but th' aureola, an oval,
 Are over the head, and below the feet—
 Around—two transparencies in rims of gold,
 A supernatural light behind the scenes,
 Bringing them out—the living Jesus man,
 At that most interesting age of fair
 And intelligent manhood—the Person
 Of the Holy Humanity illumined
 By the Divinity—the Mother Virgin
 In the confessed bloom of her spotless life,

The Golden Rose of Saints—the White Rose
Of Nazareth, all its petals goldened.
The SACRED MAN—the sweet, white-rose-woman—
Two pictures—earth and Heaven in halocs!
Just two pictures in frames of paradise
That burn and widen around th' beautiful heads
And broaden 'neath the beautiful feet:
We think of the transfiguration of Olivet—
The garments whiter than any fuller's snow.
Mary knows by an interior warmth
In her soul, it is near th' midnight and kneels
Down on the same spot whereon she was knelt
When th' angel came; and when it was midnight
Jesus prayed and gave thanks to His Father
In Heaven for His Sacred Humanity,
For Mary, for Joseph, for all men.

OTHER SANCTIFICATIONS OF SAINT JOSEPH.

And sometimes when the day declined, Jesus
Would sing a hymn with Mary and Joseph.
What a choral of voices! The angels must
In the clouds have always stood entranced
When they sang. Think what it must have been
To hear Jesus sing. Jesus loved to sing hymns.
He first learned—seemingly so—from Mary.
The Divine Man would learn from His mother,
As all men from their mothers. Mary never sang
In Egypt, not even to her Divine Babe.
How could th' Blessed Mother sing in the land
That was not God's? But she sang the sweet night
After she came up from Egypt, and Jesus,

Her dear Divine Boy, sang with her—the words
Sweet in her lips, in His lips only sweeter.
It was always a peculiar joy to Jesus
To seem to learn anything from His mother :
Joseph would look on them such times entranced.

I hear th' voice of Jesus of Nazareth singing
In the house of His mother, and wonder
If He sang that hymn here that He shall sing
With the disciples,* and if the angels
Ventured to sing that hour in Heaven, or stood
On the scarce Heavenlier Hills to listen
To the singing on the Hill of Nazareth.
Now they all sing together : now Jesus
And Joseph—th' melody, two male voices
Evened together as the world never heard,
Only the inhabitants on the hamlet
When there was singing some eve on the Hill.
And then Mary and Joseph would unite
And ask Jesus to intone a solo,
That they might listen that mellifluous
And most superlatively adorative voice,
Pouring out its only all-perfect praise,
Distinct, rich, rapt, solitary, yet full,
Like no other man's voice, exuding incense,
Sweetness, tenderness, pathos, glories—
Exalting, bedewing, embalming the ear
That heard. Such were the sanctifications
Of the Saint of Nazareth, that He shared
With the Mystical Mother. The very voice
Of the sweet Saviour-Man upon the earth

*Matthew and Mark.

When He conversed with any of His creatures
Was fulfillment, sacrifice—a great prayer
In the ears of His Father in Heaven—
And an embodiment of all melody—
Of all the songs of mankind. The sweet hearts
Of Mary and Joseph are illumed as Jesus
Sings, as Jesus reads, stops and meditates,
Walks praying, kneels, sits, works or reposes;
By His few precious words, the rich silence;
By every act, by the look of Jesus—
Are illumined. Their two hearts grow to Jesus.
Their interior is perfect. Their lives
Conform outwardly, also, in all things.
What dear dispositions Mary and Joseph
Must have had living as they did with Christ
In that most calm uninterrupted repose,
In that most familiar tranquillity of love—
A depth of peacefulness, a sanctity
To us, poor sinners, quite incomprehensible;
And yet which we somehow seem to feel,
To see and gaze upon as we ponder
Upon Nazareth, and understand how,
In some measure, it must have existed.

O, Saint Joseph! there was never a man
The intimate of God before: Shut in
And secluded with Jesus and Mary,
What privileges thou didst have! the light,
The beauty in the Face of Jesus, the grace,
The goodness; the reflection of the Lord
Under the veils that thy sanctified eyes
Saw in every glance, gesture, movement,

Flowed into thy soul till thy heart became
A well of pure grace, its translucent depths
More like th' human heart of Jesus than that
Of any other man, filling it full
To th' golden curb—seven times purified
In th' fires of love by which it was surrounded—
Overflowing with spiritual sweetness.

Sweet Saint, his calm soul enabled him to look
Most adoringly to God while he moved
Within the ring of the sublime “ shadows
And fires th' Divinity cast around Itself ”
In its earthly home. If Abraham's Place
Was a fair shaded bower to the patriarch's,
What must the rooms of that Holy House
Where God tabernacled so many years
Have been to Mary and to Joseph ?

Few came to th' Hill in these last precious days ;
God willed it so ; and neither Jesus made
Visits, or His mother, or Joseph, or sought
Company. Joseph was aged, too, his strength
To labor had subsided, and he did
No more work. Th' family subsisted now
Chiefly upon the labor of Jesus.
Contemplate Jesus laboring to support
His mother and His aged foster-father—
Laboring as a common and humble man
To support His parents ! Shall we ever
After this neglect kindness to parents,
Or to the aged ? Saint Joseph was old—
A God laboring to provide for man !

Shall man ever after this deprecate
Plain, homely, honest work ?

Mary assisted
Jesus in the support of the family,
At her embroidery-frame and her wheel.
O, blessed Saint Joseph, with such support !
How God doth take care of His loved ones !
How familiar is the Lord with His-friends !

“ST. JOSEPH, HONORED AND SERVED BY THE KING AND
QUEEN OF HEAVEN, PRAY FOR US!”

And no other man ever lived with God
So familiarly ; this favor is solitary.
It is a jewel no other man hath.
It will shine in thy crown as a jewel
That no other man hath. Who would not put
All the other emoluments of earth
Into one pyre and bargain in exchange
For that kingly joy—that one great trophy,
That one king-jewel for an immortal crown ?
O, reward so transcending on the earth
And imperial in Heaven ! Man of eternity,
Angels shall mark thee, a hundred million
Of years from to-day, and a sweet murmur
Of admiration run through their white ranks
As thou walkest by—‘ With whom the Lord lived
While on the earth.’ ‘ Lo ! the man the Lord labored
For while on the earth !’ Father of Jesus Christ—
So called—who toiled for Him as a father
When He was a Child, and whom the Lord loved,
Learned to work from, and took care of by toil
For him in his own trade, when he was old !

“ Saints and angels work for Jesus
Work with zealous prayers and deeds,
Only one hath ever labored
To supply His mortal needs.”

“ Hands whose labor gained subsistence
For the Child and Mother blessed,
May our lips to you in Heaven
Be with grateful homage pressed.”—*Ave Maria.*

SUNSET.

The palms hang as crowns full of jewels
Over the little pink house—a golden pink—
Standing in the sunset. The old olive wood,
The clump of fig-trees where Anna spun
Before the door when Mary was a babe,
The three tall palms in the lovely door-grounds,
The pomegranate trees Joseph was pruning
That day the kings came, every leaf on each tree
As gold now. The whole Hill is as a prism
Before our eyes. Sublime Hill! how it glowed,
This old spot of Heavenly favoritism,
On that silver morning Mary was born;
That midnight of March almost thirty years
Ago. Thou art marvelous again to-night,
The reflection of sunset on thy brow,
Or enringing of wings that invisibly burn
In the air. It has been marvelous eight days.
This is the ninth afternoon it has stood
In these glows—fit and fair surrounding
Of the close of the life of so great a saint.
The death of a saint is a most true sunset.

Saint Joseph is dying. Jesus and Mary
Assist by the side of his couch—the pure face

Of Raphael beside shines in happiness
Upon the almost-ready Saint Joseph.

Draws the end of Joseph, blessed Joseph, brightly near,
'T is a house as Heaven for wonders and the angels gathered here,

Hymning for the last nine days,
Lays with which the angels praise :

Often as the morning broke, often as the moonlights came
Touched with burning fingers harps that almost were in flame.

Mary heard it, Jesus heard, and the God-eyes graver smiled,

And the singing our sweet Joseph, almost from the earth beguiled :

And their wings allure him. When the noontides warm the sky, with their wings,

Then the angels stoop to fan him while their statlier chorus rings

Calm and deepened to the noon—Peace to thee, O man, of a good and proven will!

And when vesper enters and the twilight wraps the Hill—happiest Hill!

Then the angels softened sing,
Each with radiant folded wing,
As though all night come to stay,
Softer till the break of day.

Draws the end of Joseph, blessed Joseph, sweetly near
'T is a house as Heaven, overflowing with the graces here,
From the opened Heavens rained and still raining,
Closer now as fervent Joseph's fervent days are waning.

Stands beside his beaming angel,
 Most like man—almost an evangel—
 Guardian Joseph's guardian angel:
 Angel, Christ and Mary—three
 Dearest watchers! each on bended knee.

Loftier now the seraphs sing—circling sing—
 Brighter, brighter grows the growing angel-ring;
 Daftest praise is wafted, soaring now to the Most High.
 Hark the change! whispers now are heard, secrets of the
 sky,
 Benedictions for our saint, they the angels all allured are
 tending,
 Saint whose pious days in such keen fires of love are radiant
 ending,
 Allured to with the angels go,
 Allured to live while Mary lives below.

Neighbors wandered meantime, wandered wondering to their
 door;
 But a-reverence stayed them, stayed them at this corridor:
 None to pass essayed: only Mary went in, out and in, Mary
 and her Son:
 And the angels only with them tended our beloved, dying
 one:
 Nine days dying—
 Sweetest dying!

Blessed days! a fragrance so delicious this dear habitation,
 poor, pervades
 That we know it only comes, only must, from those ever
 fresh celestial glades:

A fragrance so delicious came, not only by it was consoled
that dying man of God,
But persons many, all around outside upon the sweet sur-
rounding sod,
Before the bright abode who watched and waited in the
morning and in the evening tide,
And in their beauteous reverence and in their gentle sorrow
mourned outside ;
Yes, mourned, poor villagers, the good man on the dear old
Hill above their little hamlet dies,
The Patriarch is leaving his watch-tower o'er their homes
and there are tears in all the hamlet's eyes.

It was the day—the hallowed he died—his blissful death
before,
As all inflamed by love he raised his eyes on earth once
more

As brighter morning came,
With tender, rapter flame :

The sun had gone, the fair resplendent eve before—gone
like a great cup down,
Filled with some over-burning joy and cometh up the heav-
enliest hill on earth to heavenliest crown :

And yet Saint Joseph lies in that deep, burning prayer,
His life, his strength by some close seraph-care,
Or power divine, miraculous sustained, prolonged by
Heaven and fed
While he, great saint, in this ecstasie state, Almighty God
beholds, nor dies ;
Redemption's plan surveys—the Incarnation in its depths
that lies—

Its mysteries, the glorious Church that thence His bride
will glorious spring,
And the dear sacraments that round it seven-fold glowing
ring :

Then over him a deeper burning breeze
Until the Divine Essence Joseph sees :
Nor dare we now to trembling raise
To that great, dying brow our gaze :

O, holy Joseph ! God could not take thee from his sweet
Son away,

And Mary, precious spouse, until he gave such glorious
sight to-day,

To comfort thee to go, to break such cords as round thee
bind, to leave thy God

And Mary, heavenly wife, and be content to turn and lie,
cold-folded down beneath the clod ;

For this thy great trance falls and thee to show

The land in which thy soul shall tarry while yet it waits
the Christ below :

The land where Father Abraham is made the lord, and
gives a rest so deep and sweet,

To all his priests and prophets and to patriarchal sons a
comfort so complete,

They call it Father Abraham's Bosom in tranquil bliss and
only sigh

To see His face who comes—by promise comes—to ope the
gates that bar the sky.

Saint Joseph, from this ecstasy returned,
His countenance with radiant beauty burned—
His great, pure soul divinized by the view
The grandeurs from the sight of God it drew.

He speaks, sweet Mary, kneeling by and begs her blessing
and her prayer :

There was a reverent hush of songs, a silence conscious as
the fragrance in the air

And weeping, Mary bowed, beseeching Joseph now in
meek address,

As her dear spouse and head by holy marriage-band, her
now to lastly bless ;

And that dear dying man of God, whose face did now with
Heaven shine,

Blessed Mary as her sweet heart craved in words almost
divine ;

And Mary tender kissed the hand, the hand upraised as
Joseph blest,

And to salute for her the saints in Limbus made re-
quest ;

And then, O kingly father of all lowly souls ! grace of hu-
mility !

Just Joseph dying only thinks to end his thyme-like life
with thee,

And pardon only asks and craves, O lovely to behold !

For all his faults as feeble man of earthly mould—

As humble as the simplest child, seeks of his sweetest
spouse—

He in her service may committed have in her dear holy
house,

With voice that trembles only with the tender unction of
its power,

Intreating her for him to intercede in his last waning mor-
tal hour :

Then taking of his blessed spouse his saintly leave,
Mother of God, he said, I pray thee not to grieve !

He grandly said to her—
Hush, my harp, nor stir!
List but the old tradition word,
List but the gifted mystic's chord.

'Mother of God, my more than angel wife,
Crown of my happy, abnegated life,
Above all women blest, above all women chose,
Of our frail race the solitary boast and rose,
May angels and may saints extol your charity,
And all the tribes of men your high estate, your dignity

Exalt to praise

All generation's days—

The name of the Most High through you be known,
Adorned and glorified, and round your throne,
Through days eternal, Almighty God be praised,
That you for our poor fallen race He spotless raised
And lifted up and made so pleasing in His eyes,
And keepeth for the throne that's nearest Him within the
skies.*

Thanks for the kiss I bear unto the grave on my poor hand,
I hope to meet you, spouse, my sweet spouse, in the Heav-
enly land.'

To our Lord Jesus Christ our dying Saint then sweeter
longing turned;
And Jesus on him looked and in his face the longing
brighter burned,
And wishing to His Majesty to speak, in sweetness growing
more profound,
He his last effort made, in vain, dear, dying Saint, to kneel
upon the ground;

*From a translation from Mary de Agreda in "*Ave Maria*,"

For Jesus rather willed to take him tenderly unto His breast—

And there his dying foster-father's soul, his Priest and Son confest.

(The last words of St Joseph.)

'Son of the Eternal Father, Thou, my Lord, my God,
My soul sinks at thy Feet in adoration to the lowest sod,
Creator-Son, Redeemer of the world, O give
Thy benediction that my soul may live!

Pardon the faults, in Thy service, I committed have, O,
gentlest Lord!

And in Thy company the errors done, O, Most Eternal
Word!

I now confess to thee, I glorify thee, Lord, I render thee
Eternal thanks with lowly heart, for having to such favor
chosen me.

By Thy own goodness, Lord, ineffable, I rather than another,
Sweet Lord, was chose to be the spouse of Thy own Blessed
Mother,

Grant, Lord, Thy love, Thy glory, Thy vast consideration be,
Theme of my gratitude through the unending years of Thy
eternity!'

And Joseph lay in silence then as stricken on his Maker's
Breast,

And the Redeemer-Priest, his dying foster-father lastly blest.

'Go thou in peace,' He said, 'the grace be thine
My Heavenly Father gives, the Holy Ghost and Mine.
My greeting to my patriarch fathers bear.
My weary, fervent father, go!
My people they have waited long;
Their sighs to me perpetual flow:

My dear elect,
I will protect;
Tell them that I have numbered every sigh
And their redemption draweth nigh.'

And Jesus' words are said
And Joseph leans his head

A little heavier—there comes that glow
On that dear face, the watchers know—
'My spouse!' 'my Son!' soft as the dying dove—
The softest, sweetest sigh of rapt, of fainting, dying love;
On Jesus' Breast

His pillow-rest,
A little heavier sinking of the brightened head—
And Mary looks into his face. Saint Joseph, he is dead!
And Mary weeps a flood of tender tears upon her knees
unrisen up—
Her sweet head bowed upon his feet. It was a bitter cup,
For never human spouse had been so gentle, kind and true,
And it is hard for human hearts to bid a last adieu!

And Jesus, compassionating Mary weep, he weeps,
And Joseph's dear, old, outworn body calmly sleeps—
Just newly sleeps—while in his angel's arms
His out-stepped soul in fresh immortal charms,
Already stands and smiles in touched surprise
To see such tears in Holy Jesus' sorrowing eyes:
To see his dear Lord's tears fall fast on his dead head,
To see sweet Mary's tears upon his poor feet shed:
And dear Saint, though his eyes are open to the angels now,
And he can look consoled upon each radiant brow,
Although they circle round in glad triumphant bands,
A moment he in precious indecision stands—

Jesus, Mary, Nazareth ; O, what had Joseph not to leave !
And for his poor, old presence, they so piteous grieve.

Saint Joseph's sweet soul paused and thought, his spirit
lingering stood ;

But Jesus has said go—the Lord has said—God's word is
ever good—

He bears His dear commands, His missive and His love, O
blessed trust !

'Tis only pity they should weep o'er his poor lifeless dust.

Could he but stay to comfort them—to breathe the air

That Mary hallows with her smile and Jesus with His
prayer ;

Then eager angel-bands surrounding, Joseph took—

They could no longer wait—one farewell look

To Jesus, Mary, in their sweet detaining tears, to Nazareth
lawn,

And Joseph, half-reluctant, is with the exultant angels
gone.

“ST. JOSEPH, BLESSED WITH DYING IN THE ARMS OF JESUS
AND MARY, PRAY FOR US !”

FOR HIS BURIAL.

See Saint Joseph dead ! Our beautiful Saint !

Mary's blessed spouse ! Are not our hearts bereft ?

That breast is silent, cold and dead

Where Mary laid when Anna died her head

And wept,

Where Jesus of a Child had slept.

And Jesus closed the dear eyes of Joseph.

O, man whom the Lord Jesus closed his eyes

When he died and gave the last kiss!* The body,
Beautiful, flexible, fragrant, covered,
All but the face, with light, as a garment,
As Jesus, Mary and the angels prepare
It for burial, as the ceremonial
Of the Jews. Jesus was careful to observe
And honor the rites of the ancients.
Jesus girded himself with a towel
And poured the water out upon the turf,
And in the sward where the water was poured
Lilies had sprung up before the burial—
The same seen in th' pictured hand of Joseph.

Jesus arrayed Joseph for his burial
By wrapping him in a cloak that Mary
Had prepared for him and he never worn,
And by placing a black staff in his hand,
That denoted he had gone a long journey :
The Lord would let no other hand do this
For Joseph. But Zebedee and Salome
Prepared otherwise the funeral. They were
The most pious family in the hamlet,
And had been th' most intimate with our Saint.

Cleophas and Mary, his wife, came also
Th' same evening, and others of th' family
Of Joseph that were sent to when Mary
Had divined Joseph was about to be taken ;
But the messenger was sick in a village
Upon the way for several days, and so

*Among the Jews, the nearest kinsman closed the eyes of the dead—a son for the father—and kissed the cheek.

They arrived not till after Joseph was dead.
Joseph died Wednesday night as the sun
Went down, and there was a light in the house
More than the candles lighted when he died,
And the light remained till he was buried.

Mary had put on the dress and the veil
For a widow, and knelt down by the bier ;
And Jesus put on a garment of sackcloth,
And knelt by the side of Mary. O man
For whom God appareled in sackcloth !
It was worth to die for that. Dead body
Of my glorious Saint Joseph, shrouded
And reposing there, how art thou honored !
And singularly, solitarily again.
No other individual, not even Mary,
Ever had the honor to have Jesus Christ
Attend their funeral as a mourner,
Attend their obsequies, follow their bier,
Clothed in sackcloth.

And the friends of Joseph
Put on sackcloth before they entered the house
In which he lay dead. And having entered,
They knelt reverently by the bier and prayed
As the custom for the dead ; and sat down
To weep and lament with Mary and Jesus.
Cleophas wept very much. Joseph was
By Cleophas revered more as a father
Than a brother, and he had always loved
Him very deeply, though he knew not how well
Until he had come to his house and found
Him dead. But none of them wept as Soba ;

And she and Mary Cleophas brought spices,
Such as were used in those days for embalming :
But Jesus said unto them, he hath no need ;
And when they perceived that a fragrance came
From his body, they said he is already embalmed,
So great were his virtues ; and they observed
The peace and loveliness of his face
And were consoled ; but J  sus accepted
The spices ; they had brought them out of love
For their brother, and he laid them in his breast
And at his feet, as others in His Breast,
Will lay them for Him, and at His Feet :
He sees it as He disposes these spices.

And many came from the hamlet below
To lament with Mary and Jesus ; but none
Of these entered ; but when they approached near,
They all stood without around the door
And window and looked on in silence :
Some sat down under th' eaves of the cottage,
But the room within was as a chancel—
And th' bier of Joseph, it was as a shrine.

Mary is a widow. Mary's married life
Is ended, and she sits by the bier, ashes
And sackcloth on her beauty, weeping
The truest tears for Joseph. She had loved
Saint Joseph. Never had woman before
Had such a spouse. He was the choice of the Lord.
His ring—the ring is now on her finger,
Where Joseph, blessedest, angel-like spouse
Had placed it. He is in Father Abraham's home,

This poor, precious body only lies here :
The hands that have toiled for her, the feet
That have journeyed with her, the lips that have
Always spake tenderly to her, the eyes
And the whole countenance that have beamed
On her : While her sweet will lies in the will
Of God, Mary's tears fall very fast now,
Thinking of all he had been to her and her Son.

Joseph was buried and Jesus rolled the stone
To the door of the cave—there being room
To bury but one more within the cave,
Joseph was buried therein : Mary wished
To have it so—so much she loved Joseph—
Knowing not how little she would have need
Of a grave. Our beloved Joseph is buried !
Our tears fall on the graves in Mary's garden.

“ST. JOSEPH, SINGULARLY BELOVED BY JESUS AND MARY,
PRAY FOR US !”





Joseph and Paradise.

THE body of our Saint was deposited
In the grave, but his soul was in a place
Of sweet rest, we know. Behold Saint Joseph.
Conducted by angels, entering the plains
Of Father Abraham! Behold Abraham,
Adam, Seth, Mathusala, Noe, Sem,
Isaac, Jacob, Joseph with his eleven brothers—
A thousand of the tribe of each—come out
To the uttermost verge of Paradise
To meet and honor Saint Joseph's entry!
All the prophets walk before him singing
Prophecies. David walks with the prophets—
It is greater to be a prophet than king—
And the countenances of the just shone,
And they fell on their faces before Joseph,
And lead him to his parents and the parents
Of Mary, who inquired after their daughter
And concerning Jesus: and Joachim made
Joseph sit beside him upon his right hand:
The humility of Joseph which followed
Him in would have prevented, but Joachim
Would not be prevented. 'Thine eyes have seen'
HIM! he said, thy arms embraced Him, thy feet

For Him walked. Blessed is the man in whose house
He hath eaten bread! Joseph hath toiled for
And given bread to Messiah—his fathers bow
Down unto him. No man ever provided
For God before. And Joseph sat in the midst
Of the fathers, and his parents enrapt, sat
Upon one hand and th' parents of Mary
Upon the other, with whom was Zachary,
The priest, who had given him th' hand of Mary;
And the heart of all burned in Paradise
As Joseph talked of Jesus and taught
The secret of th' incarnation and told
To them he doubted—with blame to himself,
Though none other blamed him—and how God
Removed his doubts; and of Bethlehem
And Egypt and Nazareth, he conversed:
The first apostle in Egypt, he became,
Also, the first apostle in Limbus;
And Joseph did much in these three or four years
To prepare the fathers for the coming
Of Jesus.

The dear Babes of Bethlehem,
Their innocent brows encrowned with flowers,
Hovered around Joseph, and Saint Simeon
When not by the side of his old friend, Zachary,
Lingered with the most serene Saint Joseph,
And Anna who brought Mary up in th' temple—
Who never tired to hear Joseph converse
Of her, and to whom Joseph never tired
To speak of Mary. Thou art detained in
A delightful company, O, Joseph!
Only there is such a longing for Jesus

And Mary it would have consumed his heart,
Only it was the heart of a spirit.

At length when the Baptist was beheaded
And his soul entered Abraham's Bosom,
He told yet more of Jesus in the world :
How that he baptized in the river Jordan
And Jesus constrained him ; and when he made known
This, Zachary, his father, uplifted his arm
And blest his son that he had baptized the Christ—
A grand consoling sight in Paradise,
That suddenly transfigured old priest giving
Th' benediction unto that prophet son, come
Into th' midst of his fathers, bearing fresh
Upon the white garment of his spirit
The precious red stain of fidelity.

Elizabeth, following the steps of her son,
Precious spirit ! other new inhabitants
Coming in, all they in Abraham's land,
Were kept informed of all Jesus did
Among the people ; His miracles, sermons
And parables were retold among the fathers.
Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, came and staid
Until the third day ; and talked of Jesus—
That if He had come, he should not have died ;
And as upon the third day he discoursed
With great sweetness, all they in Paradise
Heard a voice that reverberated through every shade,
And that same moment Lazarus arose,
His face suddenly beaming, and passed out,
And all in Abraham's Bosom marveled ;

For it was a land from which none went out;
 And they had joy when they witnessed His power
 Over Limbus; for Joseph knew the Voice
 That had called Lazarus forth: and it came
 That the spirit of a just man entered,
 Few days after, who communicated,
 He had that day seen Jesus at supper
 In Lazarus' house, whose countenance shone
 As of a man in the glory of youth,
 Only most holy.

Moses and Elias

Disappeared suddenly one afternoon—
 Such time as was afternoon upon the earth—
 And when they had come back in the evening,
 Related the transfiguration and told
 How the Jews were stirred up for His blood.



PASSION TIDE IN LIMBUS.

The prophets in the mountains of Paradise bewailing the Christ—Isaias in a mountain, solitary above the others—All the fathers at the foot of the mountains—Jeremias gone down into a pit below the people.

ISAIAS.

“A tender Plant”—“a Root from thirsty ground”—“who hath believed?”
 Man, woman, child, all things a beauty from His face received,
 And they rejected Him! “No sightliness, that we desire!” that Face so sweet!
 They turn from it! “they smote”—“they dig His hands and they have dug His feet!”

(From all the shades below.)

“*Kyrie eleison !*” “*Kyrie eleison !*”

ISAIAS.

His look is hidden and despised and we esteem Him not !
All we as sheep astray ! the Shepherd by His sheep forgot !
For our iniquity His wounds ! the iniquity of us upon Him
lain !

Bruised for our sins ! we by His bruises healed ! the Shep-
herd for the lost sheep slain !

(From the shades.)

“*Kyrie eleison !*” “*Kyrie eleison !*”

ISAIAS.

For the wickedness of my people ! the loving Shepherd
still—

Taken away ! offered because it was His own lofty will !
A lamb before the shearers dumb ! As a sheep unto the
slaughter lead !

Giveth the ungodly for His death ! the rich for His burial-
bed !

(From the shades.)

“*Kyrie eleison !*” “*Kyrie eleison !*”

JEREMIAS.

(Uplifting himself to his middle from the mire of the deep pit.) “*Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord ? shall I not take revenge on such a nation ?*” “*Jerusalem hath grievously sinned.*” . . . “*O, all ye that pass by attend and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow ! . . . How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the Daughter of Sion ! . . . How he hath cast down from Heaven to*

earth the GLORIOUS ONE of Israel ! He hath killed all that was fair to behold in the tabernacle of the Daughter of Sion ! To what shall I compare thee, to what shall I liken thee, O Virgin Daughter of Sion ! for great as the sea is thy desolation ! Who shall heal thee ?

(From the shades above.)

"Kyrie eleison !" "Kyrie eleison !"

JEREMIAS.

"I am the man that see my poverty !" . . . "Against me he hath turned and turned all the day long !" . . . He hath made my fetters heavy. . . He hath shut out my prayer ! I am made a derision to all my people, he hath filled me with bitterness. . . The wormwood and the gall !"

(From the shades above.)

"Kyrie eleison !" "Kyrie eleison !"

JEREMIAS.

"He shall sit solitary and hold His peace because He hath taken it upon Himself. He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him. He shall be filled with reproaches. . . My life is fallen into the pit and they have lain a stone over me !" "How is the gold become dim !" "It is better with them that are slain with the sword !" "They were defiled with blood and when they could not help stepping in it, they held up their skirts !"

EZECHIAL.

(From the mountains—by the side of the prophet the creature with the four faces and the four wings—looking to the northward, to the eastward, and to the southward and the westward)—Ezech. i, 4-14.

“Strike with thy hand and stamp with thy foot, thus saith the Lord, alas! for all the abominations of the evils of the house of Israel!” “The day of slaughter! Behold the day!” “The day it is come! Destruction is gone forth! The Rod hath blossomed!” . . . “Alas! Alas! O, Lord, God! and thou SON OF MAN mourn with the breaking of thy loins and with Thy bitterness sigh before them. The sword is sharpened and furbished.” . . . “Thou removest the sceptre of my SON—Thou hast cut down the Tree—I will come and cover the heavens when Thou shalt be put out.”

JEREMIAS.

“Our days are fulfilled! Our end is come! The breath of our mouth, CHRIST THE LORD is taken in our sins!”

JOEL.

A day of darkness and a day of gloom!
A day of clouds—of whirlwinds and a tomb!
Whose like is not since the beginning's bloom,
Nor shall be after till the knell of doom:
The heavens are moved—the sun—the moon—
The stars are dark—and it is night at noon!

“And the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent.”—MAT. xvii, 51.

The mountains of Purgatory tremble.

NAHUM.

“The earth hath quaked at his presencce. What have ye devised against the Lord?”

SOPHONIAS.

“Be silent before the face of the Lord, God! The Lord hath prepared a Victim! The voice of the day of the Lord

is bitter. Woe to the provoking and the doomed city!"
"She hath not hearkened to the Voice." . . . "She drew
not near to her God."

MICHAEL.

O, my people! My people! What have I done
That thou shouldst forsake me and turn from my Son?

I will reason: answer thou me,
Who is a God like unto Thee,
Who taketh away the stain of thy birth?
The HOLY MAN has perished out of the earth!
Because that I am fallen I shall arise;
And with me, my people will raise to th' skies.

DANIEL.

*(Remote within the mountains—seated upon the ground—
his head sprinkled with ashes, and his garments—his loins
girt with black—his raiment rent—shades of lions couched
around.)*

*"CHRIST shall be slain? The people that deny HIM shall
not be HIS."*

BARUCH.

- How happeneth it, O, wicked Israel
That thou art counted down with those for hell?
That thou hast left the living Fountain—
The paths unto my Holy Mountain?
God hath brought mourning great to me:
This is our God: there shall no other be:
Go! Go your way, I seek alone his favor,
The mercy of our EVERLASTING SAVIOUR!

OSEE.

*"He will raise us up after two days, and on the third day
He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight!"*

HABACUC.

“The law is torn in pieces ! the wicked prevaieth against the JUST ! Wast thou not from the beginning, O, Lord, my God ! My HOLY ONE—and we shall not die. Thou hast appointed Him for judgment and made Him strong for correction. Thy eyes are too pure to behold evil. Why lookest thou upon them that do unjust things and holdeth thy peace when the wicked devoureth the MAN that is more just ! but I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in God my JESUS.”

ZACHARIAS.

Shout ! Shout for joy ! O, Daughter of Jerusalem ! Exult and sing,

The Just, a Saviour cometh, thy beautiful and lowly King !

He rides upon the ass—the humble foal—ye prisoners of wasted hope,

He comes the bars of prison-holds to break, the darkest doors to ope.

Howl fir tree for the cedar fallen ! They have pierced Him—the Just !

The strong ANOINTED ONE is taken in your sins—His blood is in the dust !

They shall look on Him whom they have pierced—on His Side ! tears shall prevail !

They shall mourn over Him as one mourneth over an only son—they shall wail

As the manner is over the death of the firstborn—they shall keep

His wounds before them—the family of David apart shall weep !

Oh, what are these wounds in the midst of Thy friends that we see!

With these was I wounded in the house of them that love me!

Awake, O sword! against my Shepherd and the sheep shall fly;

The sheep shall scatter from His side when woes shall draw untó Him nigh!

“His Feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is over against Jerusalem!”

(David and all the people at the foot of the mountains.)

DAVID.

“They gave me gall for my food. In my thirst they gave me vinegar for drink!”

ALL THE PEOPLE—*“Miserere Domine!”*

DAVID.

“O, my God! my God! look upon me! hast thou forsaken me!”

PEOPLE—*“Miserere Domine!” “Miserere Domine!”*

DAVID.

“I am a worm and no man! the reproach of men and the outcast of the people!”

PEOPLE—*“Miserere Domine!” “Miserere Domine!”*

DAVID.

“All they that saw me hath laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged their heads!”

“He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver HIM; let them serve HIM; seeing he delighteth in HIM!”

PEOPLE—"Miserere Domine!" "Miserere Domine!"

ISAIAH.

"Who is He that cometh from Edom? with dyed garments from Bozrah!" "I have trodden the wine-press alone!" "Blood is sprinkled upon my garments and I have stained all my apparel!"

DAVID AND ALL THE PEOPLE.

"Miserere!" "Miserere?"

A soul from Jerusalem—

The ghosts turned to him who has come in—
Telling Christ as he left was being mocked
And lead with derision through the streets.

The pit situate below Limbus began
To heave; and a demon arose and stood
Upon the waves of the lake that burned
And told in the irony of hell of one
Of His good disciples who had betrayed
Their great Deliverer; and as he derided
Judas tumbled in with bowels gushing out
And the pit shook with hisses—hell's laughter—
Grown twice hell with and over Judas—
Sulphurous fires seething, devils groaning;
Hell breaking up—th' nether lakes disgorging—
As the unpent crater of a volcano
Threatening some doomed city, belching nearer
And nearer up to the great dividing wall—
Breaking against the deep walls and strong gates,
Mounting each higher than the other up
To inundate and sweep down Paradise
To its depths.

First hour of the crucifying :

The invasion growing more and more awful :
The angels come no more to the fathers—
Communication cut off from earth and Heaven—
The land of Father Abraham lit only
From th' pit—its seven hells boiling higher up :
Limbo distraught—a multitude no man
Can enumerate with David on their knees
Wailing *miserere*—the prophets renewing
Lamentations—Joseph standing solitary,
Looking to the earth—a great ball of night—
Moving not since th' sweat was blood on that Face
Pressed to the cold earth—seeing Gethsemene—
Jerusalem, Jesus being lead through bound—
Into the two halls—Caiphas—Pilate—
Hell's halls both, filled with His torturers—
Glorious Christ ! subjugate to death, scorned
In each ;—horrified to trance, looking off
To the scourging-place and crowning-place—
Not a blood-shedding, not an indignity,
From the vile wretch who had spat in His Face
To those who wag their heads as He hangs impaled,
Not a sigh in His agony escaping
That fixed, concentrate, enlarged seeing,
Those keen distended ears ;—grown mightily—
Lifted tall in his anguish for Him in the hands
Of whipmen. O, Joseph ! seeing Jesus whipped !
On that mountain seeing Jesus the Three Hours ;
Dire, bloody, distract to thy long-pained eyes,
Still seeing His cross !—two ugly crosses—
Blots upon His Calvary !—ignominy
With Him ! What a pain that He should die—

Th' Divine and sublime Messiah—with thieves!
O, base! base! most malignant sin! O, mad! mad!
O'er distraught, suicidal Jews! How Joseph
Saw it! His heart saw it! His own Hebrew nation—
His people! How Joseph felt it who loved
His own race and Jerusalem so well!
How he felt it who loved Jesus so well!
And Mary so well—How he felt seeing
Jesus crucified by His own people!
Oh, it did seem if he were there he could stay
Or withhold their madness; though all the while,
He knows better—the hardness of their hearts—
That He must die! It was what He came for.

Third Hour—

Joseph is left alone upon the plain.
The mountains of Paradise are clombed,
The top of every hill covered, pressed
And converging to the top more and more—
Paradise threatened with inundation—
Solitary grand Saint Joseph standing,
Hell stirred at thy feet.

The walls that divided
And separated the elect and reprobate
Were deep. It was a brave spirit would stand
And look down the dizzy depths when the pits
Were most still. Sometimes John the Baptist would,
And the brave old King David, who had been
A warrior upon the earth and had sent
Multitudes of the enemies of the Lord
Down there. Hell was far beneath those deep walls
Of adamant. The united hells lift up

Mountains of fire. Wilder and wilder grows
The concussion—darkness—explosions—flame
And smoke. A sulphurous flame spews over
The deep barriers—another follows. Wave
Follows wave, bloody and blue-burning,
Up over the deserted and shuddering plain
Where the frigid Saint Joseph stands. He sees
It not. The red fire-wave almost licks
His naked feet.

How long it is to wait!

And yet, he never thought how long, but stood
His great soul held, patient as in the flesh,
His strained brow enlarged by sight of the thorns
On that awful Brow uplifted in the air,
Holding himself and held to see each throe
Upon the Tree, exact, and honored God,
Albeit the form and figure of that cross
Lies in his heart as in a mirror cast,
Or rather as a cut in lead, heavy and cold,
Freezing into the marrow of his spirit.
Oh, ghost of Joseph! One hangs there to bleed
That once a sweet and tender Babe thy arms
Did as a father fold; and she, sad spouse!
At the foot of that dark rood her white face!
To stand there, and you prevented to stand
By her! He who shared Bethlehem and Egypt!
You not to stand by her in her sorrow!
To know that Jesus and Mary suffer,
And not to be able to console either!
Not even so much as to compassionate.
Joseph is crowning his purgatory—
The holiness of God and Heaven! Joseph

Was such a saint that we had well supposed
He would not have any sharp preparing ;
So sweet, we saw him die, until th' vision
Of our Saint in Limbus opened up :
Purgatory shaking 'twixt earth and hell,
Earth rent by the throes of that condensed dole,
Hell heaving, an ocean of fire around—
Hell boarding the foundations of Limbus,
Overtopping the high walls—one red roar
Over the plains—Joseph in his wofulness—
Sublimated immobility—standing—
Looking toward that one Cross—the red sea
Of hell approaching—rushing on to deluge
Saint Joseph—to sweep away that one man,
The foundations of the nether deeps broken up ;
The wreck of the first creation, all the wrecks
Of the earth, fire-waves, hell-men and dragons,
All in one great lashed sea of lead-white heat ;
In every spout of flame, every wheel of fire,
The glittering eye, the claw of a fiend—
Ghosts of murder redness—sin-blackness—
Hissing tracts of smoke—columns of burning sulphurs
Crushing on—the foremost fire-paw reaching
To his foot—recoiled—hell fallen on itself—
Shrank from that bare foot—flame lashing flame—
Gnashing itself—bayed—balked by one Saint—
By Saint Joseph—by that one, broad, white foot
Upon the sands—gathering to come again—
Determined for that naked foot on the sands ;—
The earth sudden cleft by a shaft as fire—
The unlooked-for soul of Jesus upon the breast
Of Saint Joseph—in his arms—appearing

To Joseph first, coming straight from the cross
To the sweet, old foster-father's bosom.
Soul of the torn Form that hangs on that cross,
Flashing from crown to sole : Joseph gathering
Dimensions—rising up to colossal stature—
As a great statue of molten, clear glass,
As some tower being illuminated—
A tower transparent from base to height—
As the light arises, widens and spreads,
Flashing up its crystal heights and dimensions,
Increasing in the light instantaneous, grand ;
The souls in Abraham's trembling Bosom—
All the souls coming down from the mountains,
Pressing to the feet of the great statue—
All th' groves of the dead as th' earth in sunrise—
Light flashed along its farthest shore. Hell slunk
To its old depths. Hell was seized with tremblings
And sank lower seven times than its old pits.

A Form, the burning fires of the Deity,
Within the arms, upon the bosom of Joseph.
Joseph stood with his arms outspread in the form
Of a cross, Jesus' soul flashed within and hung
Upon this cross. O, soul of irrepressible light !
Just fresh loosed from the nails ! The Redeemer
In His primal, glad victoriousness—
In the glow of a victor—the new Saviour
In th' first happiness of so great redemption,
Come bearing in the new-born salvation,
Embracing his dear old nursing-father :
Joseph grown very magnified—two forms—
One as th' sun unveiled, the other the moon

Refilled from the sun—Joseph's large spirit
 All light from the bright spirit of Jesus—
 His face, his arms, his garments, filled with light—
 Dripping—the airs of Paradise burn around—
 “Thy light shining upon all;” but the most
 Upon those who had been eminent in life
 For holiness—John the Baptist and others.
 O, soul of Jesus! just escaped from the cross,
 Enclasping th' Saint of Paradise, all th' fathers
 Both at Thy Feet and at his feet prostrate—
 Embracing the feet of both in their gladness!
 Picture too burning for such tepid words!
 O, poor, human brush with subject divine!
 That I could sing as some of Thy children,
 Lord! that I could sing as Thy Bernard now!
 Let us drop down in our nothingness—let
 Us adore—“*Venite adoremus!*”
 “*Deum de deo, Lumen de lumine!*”
 In the arms of the happy Saint Joseph!

ST. JOSEPH, FIRST OF THE PATRIARCHS, PRAY FOR US.



JESUS IN PARADISE.

AND Jesus remained yet with the fathers
 A Until the third morning; and the Spirit
 Of Jesus was luminous above description;
 And no one durst ask Him any questions
 But Joseph: he asked concerning Mary,
 And Jesus told him how precious she kept
 His memory, how tender she still mourned;

And her faithfulness to Him in His passion;
How she had stood at the foot of His cross,
Which Joseph knew, but it gave it sweetness
To hear Jesus rehearse it and honor
It and unfold it before the fathers :
And Joseph leaned down and kissed His Hands—
His Side—he fell down and kissed both bright Feet
Where pierced in the flesh. The soul of Jesus
Had the same wounds, only they were shining
In light.

I have but few things more to tell :
I feel like one whose mission is ended :
O, that it would make one soul better know
Saint Joseph—love the great Saint Joseph more !
I feel like one whose book is written :
And yet how much more might be said, that glad
And holy twilight land of Paradise
Is so beautiful with Jesus in it—so bright—
So like unto some heavenly morning land—
Dread, half-way place betwixt us and Heaven.

Let us remain and see Jesus receiving
His saints. Jesus salutes His Grand-Parents,
The father and mother of Mary. He looked
On them and they came to kneel at His Feet :
And He lifted them up and acknowledged
Them and embraced them as His ancestors.
Moses and all the prophets and Aaron
And all the priests, David and all the kings
Fell down and sang a *Te Deum* to Jesus ;
But most exultant—his face as the lightning,
His ardors as the lightning—was the Baptist,

Who had not until now ceased for to preach
Of Him who was to come in Paradise—
At th' doors of th' prisons in purgatory :
And Jesus walked through Paradise, the souls
Of all His saints falling down to adore
Wheresoever He came, and to sing the song
Of the Lamb that John afterward heard
In Patmos—Saint Joseph on his right hand—
And no one came so close unto Jesus.

“ HOLY JOSEPH, MINISTER OF THE GREAT COUNCIL, PRAY
FOR US.”

“ HOLY JOSEPH, POWERFUL SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH, PRAY
FOR US.”

Jesus preached in purgatory, and come
To th' inner prisons, all had arisen up ;
And they fell not down as yet to His Feet,
They feared so much. They were souls that had sinned
Most ; so that when in His plenitude the Christ
Stood before them they feared lest the fathers
Should be taken and they yet left for a time ;
But while Jesus stood before them and spake
In His compassion, the soul of a thief
Who had that moment expired on the cross,
Flashed in and fell at the Feet of Jesus
And clasped the Feet of the Lord that appeared
As wounded in his own crucified hands,
And kissed them over and over again
And again in his ecstatic rapture ;
And Jesus raised him up and he confessed
To the prisoners all his sins and the mercy
Of Jesus : how he was crucified the same hour ;

And he showed unto them his hands and feet ;
And all they in prison fell down and adored
Jesus ; and as they fell down the third time
Their chains fell off ; and there were none left
Whom Jesus had not pardoned, and he remained
With his dear people over the Sabbath ;
And it had not seemed unto Saint Joseph
Or any one in Paradise as it were
An hour, so sweet it was to be with Jesus :
The presence of Jesus was such a glory
And such a consolation in Paradise.
But as the third day drew to the dawning,
Jesus spake to them of His resurrection,
And they all began to be sorrowful ;
But He bade them be of cheer, and as th' day
Began to break, went out sudden and Godlike
As He came, and all were in expectance
And anxiety for about forty days.



Joseph and Heaven.

Ascension morning from Olivet.

JESUS leading up the fathers from Limbus—
Th' "prisoners of hope" from the strongholds—
All in shining chariots and garments—
The glory of those that follow the wheels
Of His chariot—the glory of the clouds filled
With angels round about our ascending Lord.

The beautiful, Blessed Mother is knelt
Upon the high brow of the bright mountain,
Seeing Jesus in a sky full of saints—
Upon th' right hand of Jesus St. Michael,
Standard-bearer, supported by St. John
The Baptist—and SAINT JOSEPH.

Mary saw
Joseph with Jesus ascending into Heaven.
The Gates of Pearl have opened for Saint Joseph.
Mary has seen her dear spouse admitted
Into Heaven. Saint Joseph has entered Heaven!
The one fit place to leave Saint Joseph in!
O, Heaven! Heaven! when shall we be left
In that place! O, consummation meet!
For the life of Saint Joseph, the great, the good,

*"Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart. Jesus, Mary,
Joseph, may I die in your blessed company"—and go to you in
Heaven!*

PEACEFULNESS.

Reflections on what we have considered in the most sweet Life of Saint Joseph—and of the spirit of Nazareth.

A FEW more words lastly on peacefulness,
Which seems to have been the characteristic
Or leading trait in our so eminent Saint,
The spirit of his sweet devotion, the sky
Under which his virtues all grew. It was
The tender haze of that serene atmosphere
Which naturally and supernaturally surrounded
Nazareth. Peacefulness inclosed Nazareth.
It hung over it, it stooped to it, it dwelt
In it, pervaded all its bowers and fields
And pastures. It sprang up one midnight in March
And grew like a soft, starry blossom by th' side
Of the cradle of the young Prince of Peace,
Who had descended to the earth most fair
And still. Mary was the embodiment
Of it—the Virgin of Peace—and the man
In whose paternal arms was laid the Child
Who had no father but the Eternal,
Seemed only another name for it. Joseph
Seemed but another word to express peacefulness.
It was in the kitchen of Anna and seemed
Always to flow from th' chamber of Mary.
The shop of Joseph, where Joseph and Jesus
Wrought silently together, was divinely
And transcendently its favorite place.
It was in the vineyard—under the palms—
Under the line of old pomegranate trees—

Around the tomb of Joachim and Anna
In the rocks—in the dear old prayer-place
On the hillside—the very kine feeding
In th' pastures had a look of it in their faces,
And all the flocks it fed with. It was in
Th' garments that hung round Jesus and Mary.
Saint Joseph is most precious peaceful:
It is th' light, th' breath of his spiritual bloom,
In which his graces so peculiarly hidden
With God developed.

O, that I could picture
Nazareth! that some one who loves Nazareth
Could, in its peacefulness those eighteen years
After the Holy Family came to it back
From th' exile and Egypt till Joseph's death—
Nazareth's self, its lawns, turf, trees, house, sky.

I remember a day in the beautiful June,
We had written within our chamber
In the morning of our Saint's engagement
To our Lady in th' magnificent old temple,
And at noon walked in th' garden beneath th' trees
Deepest down in the last path. The garden
That day was crowded with roses. We saw
The crimsons fresh blown, rose-sweetnesses came
To us, through a nimbus of bloom we saw
Nazareth—the vision of Mary's fair home
Rose before us, clear—beautiful—distinct—
So palpable it stood, the boughs parted
For us to look in, we said in our joy—
Our extravagance, what a field to paint!
The most beautiful hill and garden th' world

Ever saw ! and we dreamed that we could do
It ; the vision was so real ; and it seems
To us now, we saw very much that day
What Nazareth must have been when Jesus
And Mary and Joseph resided there—
That sacred and peaceful land upon the Hill
Of Frankincense an Orient summer noon
Shut up and sealed with holy hiddenness ;
With Jesus walking in it with Mary
And Saint Joseph its gardener. We doted
Over its greennesses—for velvetness,
Such grasses and verdureness, growing not
Elsewhere on the earth—flowers that elsewhere
Had no such tints and odors of delights ;
And the eye full delighted could measure
Its lawns stretching away in quietudes—
Nazareth palms, spreading their fan-leaves
For Mary and the Child Jesus to sit under—
Struck, still in reverence, Nazareth fig trees,
Rich in ripe figs—sacred sycamores, fair firs—
Pomegranates whose red apples Mary plucked
To lay on Joseph's plate—Nazareth jassamines,
Nazareth roses, Nazareth lilies, Nazareth thyme,
Nazareth grapes, melons, gourds—the orchards,
The golden olives falling—the barley-ricks—
Old sleek, white Assinus in the still pasture—
The Nazareth doves feeding in the morning
On the turf before the door, or brooding
At noon in th' crevices of th' rocks ; and all
Its earthly and spiritual peacefulness ;
The near and th' dissolving views of Nazareth,
The vistas in and out from Nazareth,

The little house and the Nazareth shop,
The Nazareth carpenter and the Divine Son
Of the Blessed Virgin—the fair disguised
Or hidden Prince—the dear Prince of Peace come
To the world so sweet, dwelling in the world
So tranquil as to be quite unsuspected;
The Peace-Prince, the Queen and Mother of Peace,
The Patriarch of Peace, moving peacefully
Over the peaceful landscape.

We looked in

And saw Joseph at work among the vines—
Jesus and Mary beneath the trees. Our hearts
Leaped, we saw this spot so much lovelier
Than any garden of the Hesperides.
There had never been such a life before
Upon the earth as either the life of Mary
Or Joseph, not to mention th' adorable life
Of Jesus. It is not only the most hidden
But the most lovely part of Mary's life—
Those, deep, waveless, irradiated years,
Between Egypt and Calvary, while she lived
In such sweet obscurity to the poor world
Around her—in such celestial humility
With her Incarnate Son while He grew up
To the stature of His perfect, divine manhood,
And the life of Joseph was untranslateable:
The ripeness and loveliness of his peacefulness
Developed more and more, till he went bent—
He was so humble—like a tree heavy-fruited,
The fleshly vails consumed by the sweet fires
Of the hidden Charity in his house,
Until he was not—having died for love—

If any one could have a gift in Heaven
I think I would be an artist and paint
Nazareth at the time when Joseph brought
Home his young Blessed Virgin spouse—the House
Of the Annunciation—the Christmas-cave
And Egypt when my young Lord with Mary
And Joseph were in it—especially
Nazareth when my Lord and His mother
And Saint Joseph lived there; and most, O, most!
Jesus visiting Joseph in Limbus—
When our Saint stood up in beatitude,
The glory on his brows—the majesty
In his appearance—Jesus in his arms—
A-down his sweeping robe floods of glory;
For which this book was conceived; so to put
In it this picture of Joseph and Jesus—
Suggested perhaps by th' Blessed Virgin,
And still we cry at th' end help! Who can paint
Nazareth! Who can paint Jesus! Who can paint
Mary or Joseph! Who can paint a saint!
Such a magnificent saint as Saint Joseph
Is! He who can limn Paradise. Words have
Rainbow shades, but none bright enough. There are
No Etruscan colors brilliant enough
To paint the Serene Patriarch of Paradise.
Blessed be God for Jesus! Blessed be God
For Mary! Blessed be God for Saint Joseph!
Blessed be God for *faith*! AMEN.

Annotations.

SAINT JOSEPH has always been represented in tradition as an aged man ; says Faber, considering his probable age at the time of his marriage :

“ In the controversy about St. Joseph’s age, I must admit that the majority of great names are on the side of his being in the prime of life, between thirty and forty. This is the opinion of Gerson, Vigerius, Theophilus, Raynaudus, Esselius, Baronius, Suarez, Vasques, Capisucchius, Serry, Sandinus, Salianus, Torrielli, Toletanus, De Castro, Trombelli, Isidore, Isolanus, Bernadino di Busto. The Apocryphal Gospels, St. Epiphanius, Cedrenus, Nicephorus, with antiquity generally, and especially ancient pictures, represent St. Joseph as quite old. Gerson feels the difficulty of the ancient pictures, but says in his usual and quite characteristic way of referring to development in doctrine as the explanation of everything, that painters did this purposely because the tenet of the perpetual virginity of our Blessed Lady was not well rooted in the minds of the ruder faithful. This reply is quoted with applause by Raffaello Maria, the Carmelite, in his very full book on St. Joseph. The habit of contemplating St. Joseph as the shadow of the Eternal Father has led me instinctively to take the side of antiquity in this dispute. Without tradition the text of Isaias lxx, 5, is hardly convincing. The opinion in favor of St. Joseph’s youth makes him more than double our Lady’s age ; and this would make him seventy when he died ; as traditions about his death seem only to hesitate between a little while before our Lord’s baptism, or a little while after it. The other opinion would add from ten to twenty years to this.”—*Bethlehem*, p. 132.

Adhering to the side of the ancient pictures and antiquity, we have also placed the death of St. Joseph “ a little before the baptism,” or in our Lord’s twenty-ninth year. The marriage of Cana probably took place about His thirtieth year, at which Mary would hardly have appeared

during the first year and a month after the death of Joseph, which Jewish custom set apart for seclusion and mourning for the dead.

In the cultus of the Church, St. Joseph is honored the 19th of March. His feast has been raised by Pius IX to one of the First Class; the feast of his patronage is also kept—upon the third Sunday after Easter. Holy Church in her office chants, March 19th:

"The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow up like a cedar of Libanus; being planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God."

"Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be assisted by the merits of the spouse of Thy most holy Virgin Mother, and that what we cannot obtain through our own weakness may be granted us by his prayers." *"Alleluia, Alleluia."* "The Lord loved him and adorned him; He clothed him with a robe of glory. Alleluia. The just shall bud as the lily, and shall flourish forever before the Lord. Alleluia." *"My truth and My mercy are with him, and in My Name shall his horn be exalted."*

"We pay Thee, O Lord, our bounden homage, humbly beseeching Thee to preserve in us Thy gifts by the prayers of blessed Joseph, the husband of the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son."

On the feast of the patronage *"Give ear, O Thou that rulest Israel: Thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep. Glory."*

"O God, who by Thy ineffable providence didst vouchsafe to choose blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Thy most holy mother, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may have, as our intercessor in heaven, him whom we venerate as our protector on earth."

"Joseph is a growing son and comely to behold; the daughters run to and fro upon the wall. But they that held darts provoked him, and quarreled with him, and envied him; his bow rested upon the strong, and the bands of his arms and his hands were loosed by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob: thence he came forth a pastor, the stone of Israel. The God of thy father shall be thy Helper, and the Almighty shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, with the blessings of the deep that lieth beneath, with the blessings of the breast and of the womb. The blessings of thy father are strengthened with the blessings of his fathers: until the desire of the everlasting hills should come. May they be upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the Nazarite among his brethren."

"*Alleluia, Alleluia.* In whatever tribulation they shall cry unto me, I will hear them, and I will be their protector always. *Alleluia.* O Joseph, obtain for us the blessings of a spotless life, and may it be safe under thy patronage. *Alleluia.*" "Supported by the patronage of the spouse of Thy most holy mother, we beseech, O Lord, Thy clemency, that Thou cause our hearts to despise all that is earthly and to love Thee, the true God, with perfect charity." "Refreshed at the fountain of divine bounty, we beseech Thee, O Lord God, that as Thou grantest us here the protection of blessed Joseph, so through his merits and intercession Thou grant us to share in the glory of heaven."

His feast has a novena and triduum. The Church honors his marriage the 23d of January. Pilgrimages have been established in his honor for some hundred years. Several devotions to St. Joseph have been indulgenced. He is Patron of Souls in Purgatory. The delightful devotion in honor of the seven joys and the seven sorrows of St. Joseph correspond to the similar devotion to Mary, his holy spouse. He has several confraternities, among which are the beautiful two: The Confraternity of the "*Bona Mors*," or a Good Death, and "The Association of the Perpetual Devotion to St. Joseph."

St. Bridget, St. Teresa, St. Bernard, St. Francis de Sales, St. Gertrude, Gerson, Binet and others have revealed and written beautiful things of St. Joseph. Our humble book beside Jacquinet's *Glories de St. Joseph* looks but tame and cold. Faber names, beside, as some of the books most to be recommended on devotion to St. Joseph, *Istoria di San Giuseppe*, by Raffaello Maria, Carmelite; *Synopsis Magnalium Divi Josephi*, by Ignatius of St. Francis, Carmelite; *Glorie di San Giuseppe*, by Don Giuseppe Loxada Becerra, written in St. Alphonso's lifetime; and in *Imitation of the Glories of Mary* and *Vita di San Giuseppe*, by Antonia Maria dalla Pergola, a Franciscan; and especially the treatises of Gerson and the sermons of Bernardino,

“the fountains from which all have drawn.” When shall American Catholics possess all these good treasures?

We have, however, for our English readers, Binet, who looked upon the brilliancy of the character of St. Joseph till each leaf of his book was one gleam of flowers and fruit in gold; a sweet and thoughtful little book of “Devotion to St. Joseph,” rendered from the French of Father Patrig-nani by a pious and able pen, and “The Manual of St. Joseph,” a large and choice book of prayer. Thanks be to God for all good food for devotion to St. Joseph. Our country was under the united patronage of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, moreover, before the desired decree of our Holy Father, Pius IX.

“DECREE FOR THE CITY AND THE WORLD.

“As Almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt to save corn for the people, so when the fullness of time was come, and He was about to send on earth His only-begotten Son, the Saviour of the world, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first Joseph had been the type, and whom He made the lord and chief of His household, and possessor and guardian of His choicest treasures. So, also, He espoused to Himself the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born, by the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who, as before men, deigned to be reputed the son of Joseph, and was subject unto him. And He whom so many kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw, but conversed with and embraced with paternal affection, and kissed and most sedulously nourished, even Him whom the faithful were to receive as the Bread that came down from Heaven that they might obtain eternal life. On account of this most sublime dignity which God conferred on His most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised the most blessed Joseph, next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble. And now that in these most troublous times the Church is beset by enemies on every side, and is weighed down by heavy calamities, so that ungodly men imagine the gates of hell to have at length prevailed against her, therefore the Venerable Prelates of the Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those of

the Faithful committed to their charge, praying that he would vouchsafe to constitute St. Joseph Patron of the Catholic Church. They also renewed still more earnestly this their prayer and desire at the Sacred Œcumenical Council of the Vatican. Therefore our most Holy Lord, Pius IX, Pope, being moved by the recent mournful events, has been pleased to comply with the desires of the Prelates, and to commit to St. Joseph's most powerful patronage himself and all the Faithful, and has declared St. Joseph PATRON OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, and has commanded his festival occurring on the 19th day of March to be celebrated as a Double of the First Class but yet without an octave on account of Lent.

"Finally, he has ordained that on this day, sacred to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and her most chaste spouse, St. Joseph, a declaration to that effect by this present Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites be then published. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

"The 8th day of December, 1870.

"CONSTANTINE,

"Bishop of Ostia and Velletri; CARDINAL PATRISI, Prefect of the Sacred College.

"*Loco † Signi.*

"D. BARTOLINI, *Sec.*"

For which praised be God. There were, in this, our country, before the Universal Patronage of the very august St. Joseph, numerous churches, institutions of piety and learning, asylums for our orphans and our poor, that bore his blessed name and invoked his peculiar protection, and now they will multiply. Great is St. Joseph in America, and will be. Montreal, the Canadas, the British American Provinces, have taken a noble lead in devotion to St. Joseph. Several of our great States honor him and are honored by counties and towns bearing his name. Michigan has her St. Joseph county and town. The capitol city of Missouri bears on her broad brow the name of our Patriarch, and has its Bishop of St. Joseph and college of the Brothers of St. Joseph. Indiana, in her delightful northern climate, has her large St. Joseph county, in the heart of which sits

Notre Dame, St. Mary's and the House from which the "*Ave Maria*" goes forth to thousands of homes—on the banks of the St. Joseph river—St. Mary's and St. Joseph's small lakes in the lovely landscapes—two little mirrors in enamel—all one nest of beauty—"the most Catholic mile in America"—grounds of the tomb of the venerable Bruté, sanctified by many chapels.

Elsewhere we have St. Joseph's street in our cities and towns, St. Joseph societies of laymen and the Brothers and Sisters of St. Joseph in our religious orders, and the devotees of St. Joseph throughout our borders.

May St. Joseph be always honored and loved throughout America and in the whole world.

"All-glorious Saint Joseph, Foster Father of Jesus and Spouse of the Ever-Immaculate Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Difference of opinion exists amongst commentators as to the time and place where our Saviour was visited by the kings. We have followed the opinion of those who place the visit at Nazareth.

"LET THE NAME OF ST. JOSEPH BE HONORED."









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